From the Forest

An Open-air Book

EXPANSE OF FOREST AND HOUSE

From the Forest

By

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Dohnavur Fellowship

NEW EDITION

Oliphants Ltd.

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TO
MY SISTER, ETHEL

O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.
O ye Mountains and Hills, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.
O all ye Green Things upon the Earth, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify him for ever.
O ye Children of men, bless ye the Lord: praise Him, and magnify Him for ever.

The Song of the Three Holy Children, verses, 35, 53, 54, 60.

(*Sentences written in large blue letters on natural wood, running round the Forest House.*)

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THE DOHNAVUR FELLOWSHIP

THE work known by this name began in 1901. There exists in connection with the temples of India a system like that which obtained in such places as the great temple of Corinth with its Thousand Servants. Young children trained for temple service have no chance to grow up good. They are the most defenceless of God's innocent little creatures. We gave ourselves to save them, and as we lived in a village called Dohnavur the work became known by that name.

In 1918 we began to take boys too, for they also are used in the temples, and still more often in the evil dramatic societies of Southern India. The story of the Fellowship is told in *Gold Cord*.

The work is difficult and asks for all that we have to give. There are griefs, but there are far more joys. The greater number of the first generation of children are spending their lives in the service of their Saviour, and for the blessing of their country.

From the first we thought of the children as our own. We did not make a Home for them; when they came to us they were at home. And so from the beginning we were a family, never an institution; and we all, Indian and European men and women, live and work together on the lines of an Indian family, each contributing what each has to offer for

the help of all. We have no salaried workers, Indian or foreign ; make no appeal for funds ; and authorize none to be made for us. We have never lacked ; as the needs grew supplies came ; and as we advance we find that our Unseen Leader is moving on before us. There are between six and seven hundred in the family, outposts in the villages and medical work.

We have no workers who are only preachers. " We have heard the preaching, *Can you show us the life of your Lord Jesus ?* " said a Hindu to one of us. St. Paul, who not only taught publicly and from house to house, but laboured, working with his own hands, gave us the pattern that we as a Fellowship were intended to follow. So the evangelist shares in the practical work of life—doctoring, nursing, teaching, building, engineering, farming, and so on.

We come from various parts of the household of God ; but we never find this to be any hindrance to harmony, for we meet at the Centre, above and below difference. And to be one in love to our Lord and in faith in the Book, the sum of whose words is truth, makes for vital unity.

Note 1

THE ravine in the forest where this book was written has deep in it an old disused coffee garden. A friend, knowing our need of a safe place to which we could take our children and workers for change, gave it to us, and the children helped to build a house there.

The story of the Brownie belongs to a date before the little band of English women, whose hearts the Lord has touched, had been called out to serve with us. That is why they do not move about her. Something of the story has been told elsewhere, but it seemed to ask for a book to itself, short though it be.

Note 2

SINCE this book was written another house has been set in the Forest. It is called the Jewel House because the stones of which it is built were like jewels when they were first hewn from the rocks. Many were veined with blue and some had patches of amethyst. And they all sparkled. Some of the photographs show this house. It was built specially for our men and boys. For since the Brownie's days the prayer at the end of Chapter 17 has been answered, and now we have many boys, and English and Indian brothers are training them to play the game.

Note 3

GREETINGS to new readers of this old story. The story of the children goes on and we welcome new friends for them. Most of these of whom this tale tells are now fellow-workers, fellow-soldiers. The fight is as keen as ever and again I say, Welcome to you, our new friends.

A. C.,
Dohnavur Fellowship,
Dohnavur,
Tinnevelly Dist.,
S. India.

That Thy Work Might Appear

> The pride of the height, the clear firmament, the beauty of heaven, with his glorious show. . . . Then commandedst Thou a fair light to come forth of Thy treasures, that Thy work might appear.—
> *Ecclesiasticus* xliii. 1 ; 2 *Esdras* vi. 40.

CHAPTER I

GREEN, green forest stretching as far as the eye can see on three sides, rising in mighty billows up the mountains, leaving bare only the rocky tops ; high climbing, low dipping forest. A valley, like the trough of the wave of forest green. In the middle of the smother of green the red roof of a house, our forest house. The house looks as if it could not breathe for forest, but it can ; in front the trees drop sharply down, like a cliff dropping to the sea, the green, green sea of the forest.

And still further down, framed between mountains, the plains.

They might be the plains of the world, so vast are they in this evening light, losing themselves in the mists that hang over the Indian Ocean, mixing themselves with the sky in the pale, far East. Up in our eyrie we, a little group of humans, crouch to the leeward of a huge sugar-loaf crag, each holding

on with one hand to its rough side as we stoop forward and look down on the forest and the plains.

What infinitesimal dots we feel here, merest leaves blown up by the wind; but by no means were we blown up, under the jungle we crawled step by step, through a dried water-course at first, and then up what felt in parts like a roof for steepness, every foot of it tedious toil because of the thick undergrowth, till suddenly we came upon this great crag like a mountain-top in a child's first drawing, as sharply cut, as definite as the mountain tops of one's imagination always are, and in geographical fact so often are not. Thus it shot through the forest, and looked over the world; a wind-swept solitary palm clutching on with brave roots to a crevice half-way up, rough mountain grass embracing it a few feet higher, then nothing but three or four enormous rocks, tossed one on the top of the other, forming an arch for kings. The topmost of these is the hill-top. On a shelf six feet below the point of the highest sugar-loaf we have found room to sit. And Bala and Sella, all quick with the spirit of adventure, stand alone on the very tip, to appear from the house below as waving, gesticulating dolls.

But the glory of the billows of green forest, the almost unearthly wonder of the mountains, seen thus in the light that only comes between rains, the blue-bordered embroidery of the spreading plains, not these things hold us, as we cling on to our various

crannies on the sugar-loaf and gaze down enchanted : Dohnavur, it is our own Dohnavur that holds us ; we can see into it ; see part of its nearly mile-long wall, the little pointed red roofs of its nurseries, the trees of its gardens, the bungalow roof, a mere slip of red paint, my room's roof a round-shaped daub, and most clearly of all the new, largest nursery, built all by itself in the field facing the hills. And now there is a sudden delighted shout, " See, its two porches ! Oh, we can see its porches ! " For the sun, now due west, has picked them out, and as clearly as if they had been three hundred feet below instead of something over three thousand, we see for a few bright moments the white mortar lines running down the long roof, the two porches, wherein are hanging the many little white hammocks (" we can see them too with our inward eyes " interpolate the fascinated children), the new boys' nursery to the north, each like a small cameo carved by those level rays. For so was a fair light commanded to come out of His treasures that His work might appear.

For surely more precious than even the glorious forest and the mountains which sweep in new and beautiful curves unperceived from below, more precious than all the coloured glory of the plains in so far as it is only of earth, air, water, is that little square within its garden walls, the work of the everlasting God. And here in the midst of the vast, the imposing, where the eye is satisfied with seeing, and the heart in some measure is enlarged to feel its

own insignificance, we look down upon that little patch on the far-spreading plains and are glad with an exultation that asks for the shout of the waterfall, the song of the birds at dawn to tell it, that such as the Workman is, so also His work.

Why should we fear for His work, whether it be in a place dear as the apple of our eye to us, or in a soul to succour whom we would pour out all we have? Are the children of these lands, yes and of our cities at home and of all waste places, unregarded by Him? On many a life fell, as we looked down, what seemed like a special ray of that commanded light, and we saw, as if we had never seen it before, that we need not, dare not, fear for any single child in whose inconspicuous life is set the imperishable work of the Lord. And proof after proof of it floated from that patch on the plains, among them the Brownie's story, now to be told.

The Brownie

My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation.—*Ecclesiasticus* ii. 1.

CHAPTER II

I SAW her first in a palm wood in the evening, and so I always associate her with the rustle of the evening wind in the big fan leaves of the palmyra palm.

We had been visiting in a village near our bungalow, a stuffy unwelcoming village, and were on our way home. She had followed us with some other children, and we stopped, sat down on the red sand floor, and talked with the group of children.

I noticed her at once. She was a downy, brownie, dear little thing, with soft brown eyes that looked up in wonder, and the roundest, dearest, little fat person covered with skin as smooth as satin. Somehow I called her the Brownie in my mind, and for years that was my name for her; though a friend who saw her soon after she came to us thought her more like a wren than anything else, and always called her Little Bird.

The children listened as we told them a story of the Sufferer of sufferers, Lover of lovers, their Saviour. They listened as intelligent children listen to a story of power heard for the first time

and then with a brief "Amma, Salaam" they left us.

Not long afterwards two little girls appeared at the bungalow. One of the two was a beautiful child. I can see her now. She was a sort of fawn colour and her eyes were like two jewels. The other was the Brownie.

"We have come to be joined," they remarked, glancing round the room as if taking stock of their future home.

"Joined to what, you dear morsels?"

"To the Way." (She meant to our Religion.) The fawn-coloured child then explained that they were children of the Goldsmith caste and, having heard us "preach" in the palm wood one evening they had made up their minds our religion was good and they wished to be "joined."

"Yes," said the Brownie, lifting her trustful eyes to ours, "we come for that. Join us, please."

When Christiana told Mercy about the Wicket Gate, and Mercy believed her, Christiana then was glad at her heart for that she had prevailed with this poor maid to fall in love with her own salvation. I felt like Christiana then, but had not her further joy of a going on together, in the flesh at any rate; for the village at our gates was as Hindu in spirit as it could possibly be. With all its strength it hated the thought of any single one of its inhabitants becoming a Christian, and twice quite lately (for the first time in its history) this disgrace had befallen it. Nothing we could say or do had

appeased it. We knew there was not much chance of our being allowed even to teach the little girls in their own homes, once it was known they wanted to be Christians. As for keeping them, they were, of course, too young to choose for themselves, and it is a criminal offence to keep a child under sixteen (they looked about twelve). Even if they had been sixteen, it would have been very difficult to prove it. For horoscopes (those birth-documents which in rural India are the only birth register known) can easily be faked to make the age whatever the relatives desire. The age in the civil court, to which appeal can always be made, is eighteen, and here again the treacherous horoscope is open to manipulation. So to " join " these two dear small people was manifestly out of the question.

It was very hard to make them understand. With their reproachful eyes turned sorrowfully on me I remember trying to explain to them that they could be " joined " to the Lord Jesus, even though we could not possibly keep them. I told them as much as I could of His love for them, and promised in His Name that He would take care of them and strengthen them to suffer for Him ; for the stern law of suffering would, I knew, touch their lives at once, and I dared not hide it from them. To prepare them to face it, to put them on the track of winning through, that was my one business ; and often I wonder, when about such work, where in the history of our religion we first dropped the painful Cross, and forgot to go back for it. But they were des-

perately disappointed, poor children, and I feared did not absorb very much of all this. When it broke on them that they must immediately go back, the Brownie cried.

Some weeks passed. It seemed as though the village had swallowed them up. Not a word could we hear about them. At last I could stand it no longer, and taking a courageous Indian woman with me, I went to the Brownie's home intending to see the head of the house and ask to be allowed to teach her. But on the way I saw her. She was in an open back yard, busy about some house-work.

Now we had done nothing wrong, we had not kept the children more than a few minutes that day when they came to be " joined," but had sent them straight back, so I did not expect anything very dreadful to happen, and joyfully went towards the Brownie who as joyfully ran to me.

Instantly the place was ablaze—shouts, howls, yells, imprecations and denunciations. Men and women and, of course, the inevitable children, one on top of the other, clamouring at us and snatching at the Brownie. Can you see it? I can, and hear it too, though it happened many years ago. I can feel too the blazing sun pouring down on us all, and smell the dust kicked up in clouds all round us.

But the thing that is most vivid is the memory of the sight of the Brownie in the grip of a huge man who was twisting her wrists, to punish her for wanting to speak to me.

Forsaken

My spirit was greatly set on fire, and my soul was in distress.—2 *Esdras* vi. 37.

CHAPTER III

Poor little frightened Brownie. She turned eagerly as the man laid hold of her and tried to smile to me, as if to reassure me, but you cannot smile for long when your wrists are being twisted, and the cry that escaped her rang through me; and then the uncle did something more cruel, and lest he should do worse in his rage at seeing her look so longingly at us, we left, hard though it was to do it; at such a moment one would give all one possesses to be able to stay and share blows and miseries. The next thing we heard was that she had been turned out of her home and sent to an uncle who lived three miles away and could be depended upon to deal severely with her. The fawn child was married in a hurry, and we never saw her again.

About this time a letter came from home asking for a book for children. I thought of the Brownie, and also of a little boy of whom we knew, into whose eyes his father threatened to put pepper if he would not give up his wish to be a Christian. To write a book just for the sake of adding another to the pile of books already in the world was out of the question. If I wrote one at all I wanted it to do something, not

just talk. If only I could tell the children at home of those two children they would help them, I was sure; in the one single way they could be helped. So I wrote their short stories and sent the MS. home, praying with all my heart that it might not be a mere interesting story to be read and forgotten, but that it might work among the children of England for those two imprisoned children in India.

After a few weeks it came back again. "It was too harrowing," the friend who was deputed to write to me told me. It must be "modified, even for grown-up people." But I did not see how I could "modify" the truth; and after all, what did the word mean? Did it mean turn the pepper into flour, and the wrist-twisting into pats, smother the misery of the cross with flowers? But what good would that do? Besides how could one? So I put the unwanted manuscript back in its envelope and wrote across it words I had read a week or two before in "Aurora Leigh,"

> You must not pump spring water unawares
> Upon a gracious public full of nerves.

and dropped the envelope into a drawer, and wished I could write properly; for I had so wanted to help the Brownie and Pearl-boy, and it seemed such a failure. I would have tried again, and written better if I could; but I did not see how I could get children at home to care very much if I might not tell them in unpainted words how much those two in India needed their help. So it seemed of no use.

But this lame attempt, this failure as I felt it, had something to do years afterwards, and this is what happened.

A friend, straight out from home, was one day rummaging among my papers, when she lighted on that envelope which I had by that time entirely forgotten. She read the note on it, and looked inside; and she felt there were people in England who could bear to know the truth, would choose to know it indeed, if the chance were offered them. And that was the beginning of "Things as they are" and all the other books (which, however, were never intended for children, being full of far more poignant things than wrist-twisting and pepper in eyes). And if, by the kindness of our God, those books have done anything at all, it is owing in the first place to the kindly-meant advice, to modify that unpleasant, unnecessary, harrowing thing, the downright real truth.

But it is good to have been many years journeying on the road of life, for one learns so many things. For example, how easy it is to do things wrong when one most wishes to do them right, and to blunder and mistake the leading, and be altogether very trying to one's Guide. By these matters one learns mercy. Perhaps that is why the old are so much more merciful than the young. They have so many more mistakes, and misdeeds, to be sorry for. And there is another thing one learns: the marvellous power of the Lord our God to over-rule and bring things to a happy conclusion which had seemed

entirely set on going wrong. Where we have failed He comes in and takes the poor, little, mangled attempts and perfects them, and the thing we tried to do and could not do, is done.

The Brownie was kept faithful as we shall see, and finally delivered. As for the Pearl-boy, he is working beside me at this moment, he and his dear little wife, who is the " M " of a " Lotus Buds " chapter, whom to save we had to fight three long battles in the law courts, winning two and losing the last. " The child will be given back," said the judge on earth : " She shall not," said the Judge of the Heavens. That was eight years ago, and here she is ; and to perfect the story here too is their first-born son, David, the joy of us all. Sometimes when I look back over the years of strife, and bring to mind the fears and despairs, and the failures, the only word that satisfies my longing to tell it out is this, " Who shall express the noble acts of the Lord or show forth all His praise ? "

But we have left the Brownie, even as in the years that followed we seemed to leave her, very lonely, very sorrowful, a forsaken child in a cruel house. " Thou tellest my flittings, put my tears into Thy bottle : are not these things noted in Thy book ? "

Not Forsaken

Blessed is he . . . who is not fallen from his hope in the Lord.—*Ecclesiasticus* xiv. 2.

CHAPTER IV

ONE day some months after the affair of the returned MS. we were walking through a thorny, jungly place, dear Ponnammal and I, and Ponnammal was talking of the people of the village near the bungalow, and of the secret things done among them, as they are done in every village in India.

We were on our way home from work, and nothing very exciting had happened. It had been a dull, uninteresting day, but the evening was to be very much otherwise, filled as it was with a story I seemed to see, though I only heard it, just as I tell it now.

We were passing some particularly vicious bushes of long, straggly acacia, with no shade, nor at that season anything but thorns. The thorns caught at our light muslin saries as we passed, and Ponnammal stopped to unhook me. "Under these bushes," she said, as she warily fingered the thorns, "the mother of that child you have so grieved over, lay for a whole day in despair, and that night she was killed by her brother, brother of him whom you saw twist the child's wrists."

Then she told me how the mother, a widow, had,

contrary to custom, escaped from the mewed-up life of the back rooms of her brother's house, the only life suitable for a self-respecting widow, and run to this jungle, and thrown herself down under these thorn bushes and longed to die.

And that night when she went home her brother took her, and because she had broken the rules of her caste, he there and then slew her. And he dug a hole in the earthen floor, packed her into it, covered her over, and told no one.

In the morning she was missed; his castefolk guessed what he had done; and they thoroughly approved, or if any did not, they were wise and said nothing, and a few rupees made all safe. Certainly the last thing in the world would have been to inform the authorities. Why bring trouble on the village, and especially upon the caste? The brother went to a town three miles off, where he had property, and Brownie stayed with her other uncle, and played on her mother's grave, and never knew it was her grave till one day, for some reason the floor was dug up, the bones were found, and the story slipped out. She was such a nice girl, that girl-mother, Ponnammal said; the Brownie was very like her, the same soft eyes and gentle little bird ways. But she had not known how to bear being cooped up in the dark back room, and this foolish human longing for a breath of the fresh air had been her undoing.

I looked at the thorny bushes, unfriendly even to us, how much more so to her as she crouched under them through that one day of her poor, brief freedom.

And I almost seemed to see her, the Brownie, but a trifle older, with that look in her eyes that I knew, the wistful, startled, puzzled look of a hunted animal taking breath, and saw her too, returning at night to that grim room, and that stern man, whose features might have been chiselled in flint for all the kindness there was in them. And in the hands of that man, that day, was our Brownie.

Not till long afterwards, when she was safely with us, did I hear of what it meant to be in those hands. The Brownie had one lesson set her now. She had to learn to suffer.

The uncle had of course been told of what she had done, and his business was to see that she did not do it again, so to make sure she would never dream of doing it, as well as by way of punishment for having done it, she was frequently beaten with a rod kept for the purpose.

Sometimes her uncle took her into a room which had no window, only a heavy door covered with brass bosses, and fitted with a huge iron lock. When that door was shut, not a sound penetrated from it to the house. To give him light to see what he was doing, he would tell her to bring a lamp, a small brass saucer with a wick floating in the oil.

Once in, he would shut the door, bid her put the lamp on the floor, and then stand before her, raining abuse upon her head till he had worked himself up into a sufficiently violent passion, while she stood trembling before him, watching the rod with fearful, fascinated eyes.

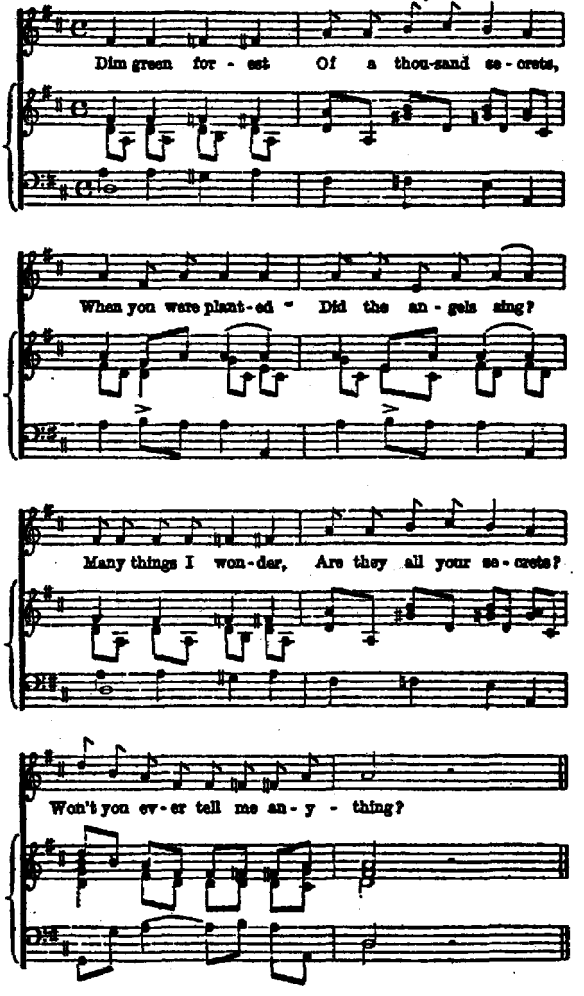
Then with a quick gesture he would tear away the one slight cotton garment worn by a Tamil child from her back and shoulders, and holding her by the arm, beat her till she fell at his feet. How she dreaded that rod, longed to break it or burn it or in some way lose it, but she never dared. The next might be even heavier. "An unbeaten bullock, an undisciplined child, they are one in uselessness," her uncle would observe, then, "Go bring the stick and the lamp." It was a hard, hard life for the little girl.

One day, after severe punishment with that detestable rod for some trifling fault (and any fault awoke, of course, the remembrance of that greater fault and aggravated the punishment), the Brownie was left alone in the dark room with not even the lamp for comfort. The door was locked on the outside, and as the big key turned in the lock it seemed to lock her in to an utterly uncomforted misery. Bruised and aching was her poor little body, bruised and aching her spirit. She tried hard to remember what she had heard that day in the bungalow. Most of it had gone from her, driven out by the events which seemed so thoroughly to contradict all that we had said. At last this memory came :

She saw, as in a picture hung up in her mind, one in pain, being beaten. Something dimly seen about a death in pain followed ; the story had been outlined to her on that first evening in the palm wood, she had not heard a whisper of it since ; but the Spirit, the Spirit who makes vital the things that matter, took

this thing and showed it to her. Then He comforted her, taught her, but how she could never quite explain, that she was not forsaken, " He Who knew what it felt like to be beaten " was with her, the Sufferer of sufferers of Whom she had heard in the wood. It was this, the power of the truth in it held her—no glad God to whom pain was unknown could have helped her now, but the Man acquainted with grief was her Succourer. The God of Joy, she would meet later.

Music by M. WADE.



The Loris

CHILDREN'S FOREST SONG.

Dim, green forest
Of a thousand secrets,
When you were planted
Did the angels sing ?
Many things I wonder,
Are they all your secrets ?
Won't you ever tell me anything ?

Great, white waterfall
Breaking through the forest,
Where do you come from ?
Where do you go ?
Had you a beginning ?
Will you go on for ever ?
For ever and for ever will you flow ?

Great, black, glistening wall
Veiled in shining glory,
Piled among the waters
Rock upon rock,
O, to have stood and seen
Hands at work upon you
Shivering you and shattering, shock on shock !

Deep, dark, silent pool
Hollowed at the fall's foot,
What do you think of
All the long day ?
Do you hear the thunder
Of tremendous waters ?
Do you hear the laughter of the spray ?

CHAPTER V

THIS story is being written in the forest. Four miles from the Dohnavur Nurseries, the Western Ghauts rise almost straight from the plains. Hidden behind the foot-hills is a narrow valley that leads into a

deep ravine carved by the river in the heart of the mountains, rising in these parts to a height of 5,449 feet. Half-way up, the mountains form a horse-shoe curve, and on the only suitable level place our forest house is built.

All round us therefore, except where the horse-shoe opens, are the glorious, ever-changing mountains, hung with forests that stretch away for thousands and thousands of square miles; forests full of perpetual delights, and mysteries as perpetual. These end from 500 to 1,000 feet from the summits, and the bare, scarred, great faces of the mountains show themselves to the world. The horse-shoe opens to the east upon the variegated carpet of the plains, now pink, now blue, now pale green or gold, according to the season and the crops. Sometimes all colours mix in it; sometimes in the monsoon, in moonlight, it is so like the sea that one can hardly believe it is land; for the long reaches of shallow water look like silvery, moonlit ripples, in a misty sea. The real sea is beyond, a band of vivid glory in sunrise and sunset, and in moonlight a dream of angels. It must be full forty miles away, but we can see the flash of a revolving light on the coast, and sometimes even the white sail of a ship sailing calmly down the strip of blue, or the bright, moving light of a steamer at night.

To the north of our ravine there is another lovely valley where the river is larger than ours. Suddenly, as you walk through the forest there, you see it part, and a broad band of white breaks the green. It is the waterfall we call Eight-Falls, and as it has no

other findable name, and the forest people have already adopted ours, it is likely to continue. Eight-Falls, because there are eight distinct and beautiful falls racing down from that break in the forest through a wide bed strewn with boulders to the plains more than four thousand feet below.

The rocks there are arranged in enormous steps, built one on top of the other. Over these in exposed places the lighter water falls in lacy patterns of living silver. At the foot is a deep, dark pool, so deep, so dark that even the pounding water thundering into it seems to make no impression. As for " the laughter of the spray," it never looks the least as if it heard it. It is too solemn to listen to such little sounds as that.

But this magnificence is most delicately decorated. The steps are blue with bladderwort. Within a foot or two of the majestic movement of the water those fragile, joyful, little blue things grow, shaking their blue bells over the chasm, smiling if they do not laugh aloud in the face of the tremendous and the awe-inspiring all about them. Many a neck has been risked to get these brave blue flowers. But bare-footed children are sure-footed, and perhaps the climb was not as hazardous as it looked.

This river owns for source a watershed within the Travancore boundary, and from it flows too, our little river, small in comparison with the other, but in rains a riotous, magnificent creature, capable of great deeds—at other times, gentle and dear. This river makes our pool ; the pool which the children

would instantly say, if questioned, was the joy of our ravine.

It is girded round with rocks, and these again are set in forest; grey and green reflections lie in it, and sometimes splashes of yellow-ochre and crimson when the sun touches the painted parts of the rocks. But its own particular colour is jade-green, clear, wonderful water-green, and when the angels are in a very kind mood they send a blue kingfisher to fish there. Then the pool is something quite too lovely for this every-day earth, and sets one thinking what the pools must be among the green woods of Paradise. Then, too, it is deep, deep enough for deep diving, and its floor is of clean white sand, the powdered dust of mountains. In this pool we, the holiday children and whoever is up with them, daily turn into water-babies, pure and simple. You may be as old, and as serious, as we will suppose Methuselah was, drop into that cool pool and you are a water-baby and nothing else. If you have troubles, the pool washes them off. Worries are just kissed away. Water-kisses, you know, are most comforting.

When I came up last week with a brood of children (the Tara set) our first thought was the pool. Into it we straightway tumbled, and forgot we had ever been hot and tired and at the end of our tether. I for one forgot that a book for Christmas had been asked for by a friendly and courageous firm in London, forgot I knew I could not possibly do it, being limp as a rag and brainless as one, forgot

FOREST POOL

indeed there was a book to do. And when a week later another mail came up and in it was a letter from a Malvern schoolgirl, saying, " We want some more books," the pool had so dealt with the half-melted grey jelly in me that it had begun to " set " as the cooks say, and felt as if under the stimulus of that letter it might possibly do something again (for it is stimulating to have such things wanted).

This then is the story of this story, and though it be a story of the hot plains it should be full of the sound of running water, and all loveliness and joy should somehow enter into it. Perhaps it will. In the meantime here is a forest tale.

A few nights ago I was wakened by the growlings of a bear, one of the big black variety. He was grubbing for termites just below the house, and his growls seemed to come from under my bed. The forest at night is a weird place, and as our windows are wide open, only guarded by criss-cross wires which, when the house is lighted in the evening, give them the appearance of old-fashioned cottage windows with diamond panes, we hear everything from the chirp of a cricket up through various little tin-horn barks of small deer, and howls of hunting dogs, to the really awesome noises of the big cats. Sometimes a sambur bells just outside our clearing, and then we hold our breath and hope no tiger heard him. We have no elephants in our particular ravine, it is too steep for them, nor have we bison, though both are plentiful quite near;

but we have found the pugs of most other forest dwellers, or heard their manifold noises in the night.

It is rather ideal for animal lovers to be thus alone in the animals' world. Our nearest human neighbours, in the next valley, are miles away, almost impenetrable forests stretch between. All day long we are out of doors; but at night it is better to be safe between walls; the beasts might resent us in their world at night.

Just about the time of the bear's visit, the Forest Ranger and his subordinates, as he calls them, came up for some work.

They were busy about it one early morning, and we were with them; for forest folk are interesting company and one never knows when one may learn something from them; but their noise had as we expected scared away every living thing for miles, and we had no hope of seeing anything special. Suddenly through the undergrowth came a peculiar kind of chirp, like the chirp of an excited cicada, only somehow more animal than insect in expression. We looked up and down everywhere, and saw nothing; but that agonising squeak rose from our very feet, and at last we saw it; It, I should say, no mere common *it* describes it.

The night had been wet. The ground was covered with soaking leaves. In one of these curled up so as to hold a pool of water, sat shivering and crying the loneliest, the minutest being of semi-human sort I had ever seen or imagined.

For one long second we were all dumb. In that irresponsible second I believed in gnomes of the forest, goblins, elves of every sort and description. But the manikin at our feet wrung its tiny, tiny hands, held them up above its head and wrung them as if appealing to heaven and earth to come to its succour. And I lifted it out of its pool.

It was under three inches long, half its head seemed made of eyes, two great, round, amazed, amazing eyes. Hands and feet it had, like a skinny old man's, but unbelievably small; the delicate transparent finger-nails asked for a pocket lens if they were to be properly examined. Tail there was none. The thing was a babe, new born, but it had the weariness, the dejection, the accumulated woe of centuries in its face. It nestled into the hollow of my hand; one of the children flew off to get some warm milk (for we have two buffaloes up with us, buffs being safer in the wilds than cows), and I was comforting and feeding it when the foresters drew near, gathered round, and stared astonished.

Only one of the group had seen its like before. "Worth two thousand rupees," he remarked, "very seldom found. The devil makes them."

But the wee thing did not in the very least mind who had made it if only it could be warm. It drank little, and in all ways behaved as a new-made human baby does, all it wanted for the first twenty-four hours was warmth and sleep, an occasional lick, warmth and sleep again.

At first I thought it was a marmoset, but it was

too small, and besides had no tail; we found it finally in an animal book, Loris is its name, the Slender Loris. It is cuddled up in my hand as I type, a little soft ball of fur, not at all disconcerted by the quick movement, two fingers curled round it are quite enough to keep it happy. A favourite position is a tight clasp round a friendly thumb. It rubs its little face against the sides of the branch, as I suppose it considers it, in most endearing fashion.

We seem to have left the Brownie a long time. Not so. She has been in mind through every line of this story.

The wood at night with its prowling things, the little lonely unprotected life, they bring her to mind. "Our lives are like untracked forests," said a forest man to me the other day when, in a quiet place in the depths of the wood, a group of them came to listen to talk about things eternal. "There are fierce beasts about us, and entangled thorns; we do not know the way through the forest of life." Nor did the infant Loris, nor did our Brownie; but neither one nor the other was left unsuccoured.

Succoured.

> Wisdom reacheth from one end to another mightily: and sweetly doth she order all things.—*Wisdom* viii. 1.

CHAPTER VI

AFTER a while the beatings ceased and the uncle tried persuasions of another sort. The Brownie was petted, given a jewel or two, told she would have many more, and nice clothes, and everything she wanted, if she would consent to a marriage the uncles had arranged for her.

In India it is not necessary that a girl should consent to her marriage. Only the very kindest would feel it necessary; but it makes an uncomfortable scene if a girl resists too much. It is much better she should be compliant. And usually she is. If she has good parents she knows they have done their best for her; a curious best it is sometimes; but again it often works out fairly happily. At any rate it is the custom for parents and guardians to arrange the weddings of the girls of their families (a son has generally more say in the matter) and it is accepted as the natural thing. No one dreams of making a fuss about it.

But the Brownie knew that the moment she was married she was doubly bound to Hinduism, and she had determined to "join the Way" as she would

have expressed it. She knew absolutely nothing of it or its doctrines. She knew only what she had heard that once in the palm wood, and again in the five or ten minutes we had talked to her and the fawn-child in the bungalow. But there is a word which says, " I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me," and " all men " includes little girls. In those few minutes He Who was lifted up so that this child could see Him, drew her. There is no other way to explain it.

So she refused all the blandishments showered upon her at this time, risked a return to the discipline of the rod (perhaps it is quite impossible for you and for me to understand exactly what that meant of real downright heroism, for we have never felt the tingling of that rod), and she possessed her soul in patience.

Her home now was in a small country town, steeped to the eyes in superstition of every sort, dense with Hinduism of the least elevated kind, benumbing in every way. And in the whole town there was only this one child who cared in the very least about the Lord Jesus Christ, and she was shut up according to the custom of her caste, within the four walls of a house, a house where she was not loved. Love can make any four walls lovable, they would feel protective to the loved child. To the unloved they were prison walls, and the air inside must have stifled her many a time, even as the air of that other prison house had stifled her mother years before; but she kept her soul alive

by recalling again and again the fragment of truth she knew. Truly there must be eternal honey in the flowers of God, else she would have sucked her two or three poor little blossoms dry, for no other sustenance had she. Courage to hold on, faith to believe that somehow we should find her and help her, these were hers, and nothing could kill the faith in her.

At last, some three years after the beginning of things, a queer, half-witted but sincere old Christian woman, once a devil-dancer, happened to go to that town for work, and happened (I use the word as it is useful, but it holds more than a mere happening) to get on the Brownie's tracks. They met, held speech together, and the Brownie made up her brave little mind to escape to us, or perish in the attempt.

I cannot explain her courage except by remembering that wonderful tiny, but exhaustless store of her secret honey. If a little of earth's honey drunk straight from the honeycomb could make a tired-out soldier strong to fight through a long day ("See how mine eyes have been enlightened because I tasted a little of this honey," he said) how much more the heavenly, the nectar of the flowers of God? She knew that her protestations against marriage would have small effect upon her uncles. They would certainly soon force her through the ceremony, driving her at the end of that dreaded rod through the idolatrous parts of it, choking her remonstrances with the strangling cord, which once tied round her neck made her slave for life to the unknown man

they had chosen as her master, to use a common and appropriate Tamil word for husband.

There was nothing for it then but escape.

How she effected it we never fully understood. I suppose because it cannot be understood naturally. But our religion is full of the supernatural, as men call it, and a thing quite out of the ordinary is nothing, and this was that. The old ex-devil-dancer was extremely queer-headed, not at all the kind of adviser one would have chosen to deal with a difficult matter. But fools do certainly rush in where angels fear to tread, and sometimes the fools succeed in a most astonishing and blessed fashion. In broad daylight, without a single attempt at disguise or precaution, the Brownie walked out of her uncle's house, and the old ex-devil-dancer guided her through the maze of streets which she had half forgotten, and along the highroad for three miles, and so to the bungalow where we used to live. I have often thought of that walk in the noontide heat. Did our God make of the very light a covering for her ?

They reached the bungalow at last. But we were fifty miles away. The Brownie seems to have taken this news calmly, and as calmly the next announcement, that the Walkers chanced to be journeying in these parts, and were expected soon.

Now the beautiful planning of this was lost on the Brownie, but there is no need that it should be lost upon us.

In all our fifteen years of life together, I only

remember the Walkers once leaving their work for any private, personal reason (except illness). That once was in November 1903 when their relatives passed through Colombo on their way from Australia to England. They went to Colombo to meet them, spent a day or two there, and then returned to Dohnavur *viâ* our old home on the east, a round-about, tiring journey; but they wanted to see the people, and revive in their hearts and minds something of that which they had been taught when we lived in the village by the palm wood where the Brownie had first heard of Christ.

Close upon the time those relatives left Australia the old ex-devil-dancer went to the Brownie's town. The timing of the arrival of the Australian mail boat, of the Walkers' boat as it brought them back to India, of the train which allowed them to go on at once by cart, of the bullock-cart (most notable, perhaps, for every sort of delay may occur where bullock-carts are in question), all fitted perfectly, arrival and departure dovetailing the one into the other with a precision those who have to arrange journeyings in the East will recognise as quite unusual.

So all went well. The relatives who chased after the Brownie found they had the Iyer to face. Something restrained them from proceeding to violence, for they could easily have overpowered him, and carried her off again. Something? no, Someone; and that Someone gloriously namable, recognisable to those who know Him and are accus-

tomed to His ways. How often we have seen the old story of Philip and the Ethiopian re-lived before our eyes. We have ceased to think of it as "wonderful," rather it is natural. It would be more wonderful if there were any failure or flaw in those plans that are silently planned for every one of us. And yet looked at in a simple human way, it is wonderful: "Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, What is Thy name that when Thy sayings come to pass we may do Thee honour? And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after My name seeing it is Wonderful? And the angel did wondrously, and Manoah and his wife looked on."

Thus did we look on, and thus was the Brownie succoured.

Counter Fire

When this was done, they praised the Lord with psalms and thanksgiving, who had done so great things for Israel, and given them the victory. —2 *Maccabees* x. 38.

CHAPTER VII

JUST above our forest house is a huge round head of rock, jet black in certain lights, deep violet in others. It is at this moment covered in patches with grass of emerald green, greener far than any grass elsewhere. In the dry nullah running alongside this boulder head, all the scrub is ruby and amber coloured, beyond that come bamboos, a great thick field of them through which we threaded our difficult way when we tried to reach the upper watershed last year. This bamboo field is a maize yellow; round it, below, and far above hang the dark green forests, clinging like moss to the crags.

A month ago a fire raged in this valley. This is why the colours are now so beautiful. We in Dohnavur watched it through the telescope, saw it crawl round the headlands and slowly descend the ravine, licking the black rocks with great orange tongues, springing high in air sometimes, as it caught some new clump of bushes or tall tree, a wonderful, but to us a most unwelcome sight.

We knew the forest people would be up, they had

seen the fire long before it had turned the corner into our valley. We knew they would be fighting it hard; but what are a few puny men to a forest fire? So we knelt down by the telescope and asked that the Lord our God would be a Wall of Fire round our forest house, and protect the men now trying to beat it out, and then, for we could do nothing more, we went to sleep in peace.

My verandah faces that valley. I woke several times, and always saw that bright, glowing, orange cloud hanging over it. The whole ravine was one rich glow. An awkward little thumb of rock which juts out from a foothill between Dohnavur and the valley kept us from seeing much below that fire-licked head, but we had seen enough to send us up early next day to help, if we could.

Going up, carried by four stalwarts in a kind of canvas hammock, I listened to their talk, which was not cheering, for they were sure we should find the coffee garden, if not the house, a charred heap, till I told them about our prayers round the telescope, which reassured them; and they turned to lighter matter. One delightful bit of information I gleaned, "That spider's web (it was a glistening sheet high in air suspended between trees) is like the web the spider wove over the mouth of the cave where David hid when he was flying from Saul."

We got up to find the forest people exhausted after three hard nights and days' fight with the ten-mile-long snake of fire. They had run short of food, and were too tired to stir even though that snake

was still crawling on. It had just reached our ground, had crossed the border, and was six feet in, the very hour we got up. No harm was done to the place, not a bush scorched, only a little grass burned. The Wall of Fire had been round about it.

That evening, fed and rested, the forest guard and coolies came to our house for a meeting. As they sat round the fire whose hearthstone is the uprooted Siva's symbol, they saw it and quite visibly started. Then we told them the story of the prayer round the telescope, and to our joy the headman exclaimed, "Why, that was reasonable. We fight a fire with counter-fire." And they described how, and told of the awful devouring power of the counter-fire, and of how one of themselves had been burnt to a cinder in it only a year ago. "The presence of your God was the Counter-Fire. No wonder your whole place was kept safe. The fire knew the Fire."

Not often has a missionary's text such illustrations: the impotent hearthstone, the Almighty Counter-Fire (the memory of that devouring fire that had slain their comrade suggested another thought: "A fire shall go forth from His wrath and who shall quench it?"); together they preached in words as vivid as flames. And the men listened, and we knew they understood.

Which things are allegories. As indeed is everything one sees in this glorious open-air world of God. Look at the fresh grass where the fire licked the rock. Is there nothing there? no word for the desolated of all time? But the story flashes across the years

to the Brownie, flings its radiance and its glory round that story of those years, of that walk, and that arrival, writes in bright letters over the page of the life of a simple Indian girl these great words "The merciful and gracious Lord hath so done His marvellous works that they ought to be had in remembrance. Among the gods there is none like unto Thee, O Lord: there is not one that can do as Thou doest."

Glow-worms' Eggs

> Neither compared I unto her any precious stone, because all gold in respect of her is as a little sand, and silver shall be counted as clay before her. Above health and comeliness I loved her, and I chose to have her rather than light, because her bright shining is never laid to rest.—*Wisdom* vii. 9, 10. R.V.

CHAPTER VIII

ROUGHEST travelling at home is luxury compared to bullock-cart travelling in India across open plains deep in sand, on roads which, off the main thoroughfares of the land, are execrable, down dried-up water-courses, if it be the hot weather (and then sickening heat is added to the comforts of the way), or through sticky mud and muddy water of uncertain bottom, if it be the wet season. Certain parts of China sound as nice, but in those parts there is, we hope, less prostrating heat. The direct rays of the sun in tropical India have to be experienced to be understood ; the mere reflected glare can kill. But had that journey across country been ten times as tiring as it was, it would have been fifty miles of joy to the three who now nearing Dohnavur on a certain memorable day could hardly sit in the carts, so impatient were they to arrive. And when they did—but there are some things too rapturous to write about.

It took a week or more to hear the Brownie's

story, settle her into the new life and begin her education. At first, too, there was the rather disquieting possibility of a law suit. We could not have proved her over sixteen and, as I said before, eighteen was the safe age. Her people would certainly have got her had they gone to court, that is, according to the courts of earth they would have got her; but to us who have seen, as I have told, the reversal of a decree set forth in an earthly court, seen the case won in the heavenly court, seen that awful, glorious paragraph in the 18th Psalm which by a powerful word rends the heavens, and reveals what is, even the Arm of the Lord stretched forth between the riven thunder-clouds—"He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of many waters"—to us who have seen this tremendous poetry move in tremendous deed here and now, in this matter-of-fact twentieth century, nothing seems difficult, nothing impossible. But in those days we had not seen, and I remember how we prayed that the quietness of our God might be upon the uncles that they might be unable to move.

We found the Brownie extraordinarily enlightened. Continually in teaching her, as often in teaching other converts who had learned nothing before they came to us, but had only heard of our Lord in open-air preaching, we found ourselves recalling those mysterious words in St. John, "That was the true Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

I stopped there for a moment and thought,

THE FOREST
HOUSE

searching for a picture to tell what words cannot. The shadows of the leaves are dancing like grey elves on the grey rocks opposite; that is the Dance of the Day, familiar everywhere; but the Dance of the Night in these forests, after rain, is something so unlike anything one sees at home that it is not easily shown. And I think it is the picture I was seeking.

Imagine a waterfall pure white in faint moonlight; see behind it a cave, black as a hollow carved in jet; see that cave one dazzle of pale, green, moving lights: that is the Dance of the Night.

And in the open over the water, up and down in the shadowy wood, everywhere they are dancing, myriads and myriads of fire-flies starring the trees, lighting the stream, everywhere one mazy movement of throbbing, living light.

We found the mother of them, one dewy early morning. She was crawling round our door as if looking for a way in, a long, dark-brown important-looking person, carefully carrying her two large lights. We welcomed her in, and that evening in the dark read by her light the words I have quoted from St. John, her lamps trailed across the page which opened by chance at those words, and we read them as easily as one reads by any small clear light, so bright were those lovely green ovals.

She was a placid creature, quite easily observed. Before we read her story in Fabre, whose insect books are useful for such purposes, we had seen all he describes, seen her project her wonderful little

tidying apparatus and tidy herself after meals (it was almost like seeing a pocket-comb produced and used, only the pocket-comb " worked " itself) ; seen her chloroform her prey, the fat snails we gave her, before converting them into soup, seen her in fact live her leisurely, illuminated life.

The wonder of that life lies in its light : the Indian firefly is a beetle ; his beginning is an egg ; the egg is luminous from the moment of its creation. We have seen the eggs laid in the moist sand. They were like pale pearls alight.

Light, light, shall we ever get to the end of the wonders and the mysteries of light ? Think of the wealth of it there is to spare when the very beetles can begin in light, be cradled in it, nursed in it ; light pure as light can be, part of their very being.

It reminds one of nothing so much as the lavishness of gold used for the decoration of the pupa case of the Danais butterfly, that exquisite blue-green pocket with its rows of golden balls, not yellow, but as if made of real gold dust. And we have butterflies whose feathers are far more golden than the under side of the dove's wings in sunset, which the rejoicing poet saw as he looked up one evening apparently after a depressing day ; we have seen exactly the same thing when the white herons fly home across the rice fields at sunset. Feathers of yellow gold, he wrote, pleased I am sure to have got the exact word. But these butterflies have on their wings something of the apparent quality of gold, as golden as gold. For the earth is full of God's riches, and

He puts these things in it for our comfort perhaps, knowing some of us are often short of the other gold which is so useful for the present. He who has gold to spare for pupæ and butterflies' wings, say the little clear voices that sound from all creation, will find enough for us to do all He means us to do; just as those lighted eggs seem to tell of a light so abundant that we need never fear we shall be left to walk in darkness.

How did that light get into the egg?

Nobody knows. We live among mysteries. No one even knows exactly what the light is. Learned words describe it. They do not really explain it, they are rather like the doctors in Matthew Arnold's poem who shake their sapient heads and give the ills they cannot cure a name. We give the things we cannot know a name; when we go back and back to the how, we are shut up to mysteries.

"Certain tissues of the bodies of these beetles have the power of giving off light, just as other tissues exert a mechanical action or emit electrical energy. The luminosity is under the control of the insect and heat is not produced. It has been remarked that these insects can convert a quantity of energy into its full equivalent of light without loss due to the production of heat: no means are known of doing this artificially, and even the most modern devices for light production convert only a fraction of the energy into light." Wonderful, yes. Explicable, no. We live among mysteries.

We live among them too in the spiritual world.

Who can understand how this other Light, this Light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world, enters into the soul of him, saturates it with light, which no darkness can entirely quench till, if, that awful day comes when it chooses darkness rather than light? Then, or so it appears to us, the light goes out. But there again we touch a mystery.

Our Brownie had not so chosen; her light had not gone out; at the first glimpse of a greater, all within her had responded, and that other mystery, the will, had willed for more. To watch the effect of spiritual truth now for the first time being brought to bear upon her from outside, was like watching two lights meet and merge.

I shall never forget teaching her about our Lord's death on the Cross. She was very ignorant, never having learned to read, and so I read slowly from the 19th of St. John, stopping only to explain an out-of-the-way word or expression, trusting to the revealing Spirit to do the rest. We were on our knees: how can anyone read such words comfortably sitting down? How bear them? The Brownie, to whom the whole tragedy was appallingly new and vivid and awful, broke down utterly. "How could they hurt Him? How could they?" she sobbed hotly. O God, forgive us that we can read that story ever, and be cold.

The Minor Operation

> Again, there is another that is slow, and hath need of help, wanting ability, and full of poverty; yet the eye of the Lord looked upon him for good, and set him up from his low estate.—*Ecclesiasticus* xi. 12.

CHAPTER IX

THE Brownie soon showed of what stuff she was made. She had, when she came to us, long trailing ears, the idea of her caste and various others of this South land being that the more the jewels hung in such an ear lie along the shoulder, the more admirable it is. But none of our girls had such ears. For this doubtless they are grievously commiserated by all but the more educated. Still the Brownie, being nothing if not thorough, wanted her ears short, and this meant a cutting, called by the nearest Government dispenser a minor operation.

It might have been major, however, in the Brownie's imagination, nor should I greatly enjoy to lie down on the operating table in that grubby little surgery, and feel a pair of scissors snipping about my ears. This particular man not only cut, he did what he called trimmings; these were literal trimmings, and conducted with exactly as much deliberation as if he had been dealing with tuckers. Then when one was done there was the other.

And this was the least of considerations. The

real crux lay in the fact that, should a court case follow, the fact that a portion of flesh belonging to the caste had been deducted from the debated goods would not by any means ease the situation. Such matters expressed in legal language can be made to sound quite serious. We knew that; but the Brownie was fixed in her determination to get rid of her horrid heathenish ears, and it was done accordingly.

"And much to be approved," remarked the operator, clipping carefully, "such being remnants of barbaric age of remarkable ignorance," for he and his were of short-eared customs. And he discoursed on education, and the benefits thereof, much in the spirit of those two frank souls, who, in an essay on Friendship for the matriculation examination not long ago, wrote feelingly, "We must always have friends; they might become Stationmasters, and give us free passes, or even become Judges, which they can help us more if accused." And again, "He stuck to his kiths and kins and gave them all best posts."

Not one word in fifty did the Brownie understand even when he descended to Tamil; but then her ears were fully occupied with their own affairs and did not listen much. This was a pity, for his flow was wonderful. And as always when under this sort of waterspout I wondered however he did it, till I remembered his literature. That explained it. We do not often dip into these wells, but quite lately we did. It was by mistake. An advertise-

ment gloriously worded offered a book promising rather rare historical information; and we bought it.

We did not proceed far. Garbage is not attractive food. But a sentence or two remain with us, have become indeed household words. The pleased human face, for example: "Each undulation of the face while smiling was shedding sweet lustre like moonbeams all round"; or an absent-minded person: "Lost in a dream as it were which enveloped her as with a halo"; or a troubled spirit: "A flood of tears came gushing into his both eyes which he with the utmost effort could ill afford to keep under control"; "Her corrugated eyebrows quivering lips and convulsing bosom evinced the most ineffable anguish"; and, most lovely and lucid of all, this on fear: "The very blood running into her veins seemed to have divided itself to shallow her up into its chosen."

But such were endless, every page sparkled with them: "A dreamland of felicity beaming with the effulgence of the vernal bright moon floating in the ocean of liquid gold before their fancied vision. To picture in fancy its splendour would indeed be soaring on elysian reverie far beyond the conception of human conception. The fragrant candles burning with it emitted beautiful sweet scented odour and light of uncommon effulgence converting the hall into the pleasure hall of the gods. All the while sweetest music was pouring ambrosia into the ears of those present there." And these pleasant things

happened "where all the beauties and rareties of the world conglomerated."

When we retired from the pages of that book, there was, as it remarked about somebody else, "no other alternative than to run away laughing in our sleeve."

They that feed upon them are like unto them; but is it not instructive to see what beauties and rareties can be "conglomerated" with our plain English tongue? One cannot help wondering what will become of it when the new Indian policy takes effect on the schools and colleges of the land. Perhaps the soul of it will join company with those souls of which that bright book writes, "they took eternal rest under the cover of the earth."

But the medical's talk, though interesting, was unnecessary, and I tried to get him off his conversation exclusively on to his work; in vain: it was too good an opportunity to miss, and to do him justice I must say he worked well too. The ears were quite a success. I thought the Brownie might be faint afterwards, and had some sal volatile ready. Not she. She screwed her face into a bunch and never moved even under the trimmings. The minor operation over, she slipped off the table, said salaam to the operator, and smiled to me. Never was such an imperturbable Brownie.

The first thing thereafter was to learn to read. After a month or two of struggle I found the poor Brownie in tears on her knees. She was explaining to her Father in heaven, Who was, she was sure, interested in the matter, that all these years she had

been kept, and now she had been brought and "joined" and all was well, only she could not learn to read. Would not He Who had done such great things for her do this last little thing?

It was done. The Brownie learned to read. But the story shows her exactly, for she was not endowed with "mystigating intellect," another of our new words, she was in fact stupid. The first time she travelled by train she could not be persuaded to hurry and was nearly left behind. "I thought it would wait for me," she said, calculating as half India does the speed of all vehicles by the habits of the familiar bullock-cart. But though not clever she was very strong and very simple in her faith, and worth so much to the Father of us all, that there was nothing He would not have done to help her. For there is power in the Name. She had called upon the name of the Lord, "O Lord, I beseech Thee deliver my soul." She had loved what she knew of the One with the Name that is above every name. Whisper that name in the ear of the Father, ever so faintly, ever so ignorantly, and instantly all the angelic forces of heaven are at your service; and energies are set in motion on your behalf, beside which the torrent of our river when a tremendous rainstorm floods the watershed, and great, mad, leaping, racing, living white thunders down the ravine, is as the trickle of a dew drop down a daisy stem. And now for this trifle He was at hand again, for there is nothing in all creation too small for Him to note.

The relatives heard about the minor operation, but they did not file a suit, which was an unspeakable relief, for fights in the courts—or anywhere else for that matter—are anything but joys. There is such a thing as the joy of battle ; I know it : it is a very solemn joy. But for the most part battles are full of the most prosaic weariness, toil, discouragement and fear. The glamour and the poetry, and the glory of them—who knows anything of these things at the time ? It is just grim hand to throat fight.

Last night we overheard a forest fight. Crash, crash went what sounded like dry branches cracking one against the other, sometimes the trampling and crashing sounded far down the ravine, then it would come nearer, till the noise seemed to be plunging about in the river-bed by our pool ; every stamp, every crack echoed through the house.

There was a little moon, but the forest lay in black darkness, and except for the racket which was doubled as all sounds here are by the precipitous rocks, it was quiet as a church. We sat up in the dark for twenty minutes or so and listened, not lighting a lamp because we half hoped to see the big forms of the two sambur emerge from the forest fringe at our doors. Gradually the noise died away, and we wondered how much of their beautiful antlers remained to either of them.

We have learned in Dohnavur to thank God for peaceful, commonplace days and quiet nights, though we do ask to be kept from that sloth of spirit which would shrink back from battle ; and

for everyone who offers to us I copy these words from Garibaldi to his soldiers :

" Come, . . . I promise you weariness, hardship, and battles. But we will conquer or die."

And these too from Père Didon :

" I do not want people who come to me under certain reservations. In battle you need soldiers who fear nothing. . . ."

And again :

" This sacred work demands not lukewarm, selfish, slack souls, but hearts more finely tempered than steel, wills purer and harder than the diamond."

Cleaning Up

O holy Lord of all hallowing, keep undefiled for ever
This house that hath been lately cleansed.
—2 *Maccabees* xiv. 36.

CHAPTER X

THIS chapter began with the fixed intention of keeping to the plains; but the forest allures: I hear its call; I feel its breath. Keep it out of our book I cannot; it will end in being steeped in it.

South Indian mountains are built of gneiss veined in parts with lovely coloured stone, which the children find in bits in the river bed, and which we turned out in quantities when the house was going up. Great boulders are strewn all over the ravine, blocks of granite—weatherworn and beautiful. Here and there buried in greenery we come across what looks like a playground of giants. Did they play ball in those days of the making of mountains? We often find traces of an interrupted game of ball; sometimes they played at making caves. Near the house there is one such, called the Cave of the Good Samaritan because a near relative of that kind man discovered it, and got a ladder made down into it; for the giants forgot the staircase. In this cave I am to-day. It has followed the fashion of the mountains and shaped itself horse-shoe wise. Round me on three sides and narrowing

towards the fourth are tree-crowned rocks, fifty feet or more from base to summit; ten feet from the ground at the place where the cave is contrived, there is a little level space, walled by the dark rocks and roofed by the greenery seen as a tracery against the sky. This platform drops, where the horse-shoe opens, straight down to that which has come unbidden and mixed itself up in the Brownie's story, the Ferny Rill.

When first we found it, it was not a rill but noisome, choked-up swamp, a haunt of mosquitoes, of whom, alas, a few remain for the discipline of our characters. Sluggishly crawling from under the rock was water of the consistency of badly made coffee. All it could do, poor leaf-smothered thing, was to ooze through the jungly undergrowth and try to look after a clump of cane, the beautiful cane of commerce whose palm-like foliage fills the nearer foreground where the horse-shoe opens.

We cleaned up the swamp, found a gravel bed and clear water, helped it on its way, planted ferns by it, tree ferns from higher levels, and that joy of ferneries, the lygodium scandens.

At this season our rill is perfumed with an air so sweet that when it meets us as we go down to it we stop to drink it in, and wonder whence it comes: "There is no air like that which comes as through a filter made of a hundred scented trees, a subtle mingling of their clean woody odours," as Seton Merriman writes of the mountain air of Corsica, and India is a land of scented trees. Or it may be from

some high flowering thing, for the trees hereabouts are towering pillars, creeper-covered, and far overhead the creepers fling out tassels and festoons. Perhaps from one of them this sweetness drops.

The Rill—the Brownie. How many a might-be ferny rill in this crowded India works its way feebly through the undergrowth of life, choked by the débris of things, the crushing pettiness of the futile, losing itself finally in some poor swamp. How many in England and in all lands. Wasted lives we call them, and perhaps wonder a little sadly over them, puzzled by the scheme of things that includes them in its scope. If we had the handling of it, should we not considerably improve it? "I be creator, chopping and changing it?" No, but there is a chopping and changing open to us and intended. Somewhere is the swamp we are meant to re-create. Let us find it then, set to work to turn it into a rill, plant fair things by its edges, see it sparkle under God's blue sky, feel it fill with the breath of the blessed flowers of God, know something of that unearthly joy, the joy of being in the least little measure fellow-workers with the first great Maker of Gardens: And the Lord God planted a garden. Shall we ever get to the end of those words?

There was débris to clear away, of course, in our Brownie. She had thought the good things of life were to be found in getting, not giving; she had all sorts of upside-down ideas about what was fitting and what was not, the conventions of existence—

and India is as full of them as any London drawing-room—had seemed important to her ; of the things that really count she knew little. But the rill was cleared and ferns began to grow, and sweet airs hung about it, and there was one less swamp in the world to make the angels sorrowful. Poor angels, they must sometimes long to see all the world's jungles cleaned ; and how they must wish, if they are subject to such human things as wishes, that they might join us visibly sometimes, and set to, and help us to clean up.

We had an unexpected cleaning up to do in our ravine when first we bought it. It had been owned by a Mohammedan who had bought if from a Hindu who had set up a shrine which the Mohammedan, not desiring to invite the wrath of any gods, had left untouched.

When first we explored the upper river-side we found a Persian rose tree growing by the water, and oleander, and jasmine ; the pink of the roses and oleander sang like a new, clear note through the harmony of green and grey, arresting us at once. Now, few love flowers in this South land enough to plant them just for joy's sake, and we were as much puzzled as pleased, for we did not know about the shrine, till one day we came upon it. Siva's symbol, a stone sacred all over India ; and a cast-iron idol, called the Demon of the Chain, a most fierce godling. Set in front of it, just as the Hindu had left them years ago, were a censor, lamp and bell.

At first we thought it would be good to do as

Gideon was commanded to do, and throw down the altar of Baal, but we knew that would not impress the coolies who by that time were with us, nearly so much (for they would never go near the place) as would the sight of those things made impotent: so we carried them to the coolie hut, which as there was no place else we all shared with them.

This hut is hardly a house, there are no rooms, only four verandahs opening on a square courtyard, unroofed of course, into which the rain pours in wet weather, and out of which it drains by a channel cut through one of the walls. It is built of stone and mud, thatched with grass, and its floor is beaten earth, cheerful mud in rain.

We, the Tara set and I, had one verandah; for coolies were hard to get in sufficient numbers and those eager children were worth more to us than twice their number of hired carriers; it was they who did most of the carrying away of the excavated earth from the house site, and with Preena as leader they took a full share in all our undertakings.

On the other three sides of the hut the coolies we had been able to get, some thirty of them, cooked their rice and curry in the evening, each set by his own little fire; and after supper they and the caste-men from the grass huts all round, carpenters and masons, superior people and unable to mix with coolies, gathered round and listened for as long as we could keep awake to talk to them. This was the opportunity for the Demon of the Chain.

THREE BABIES AND BRASS POT

The meeting over we all crept into our respective corners (ours was made private with mats), and in the quiet that followed the meeting we heard the coolies discussing which, of all the awful things that might be expected, was most likely to occur that night. They knew as we knew that on one occasion a tiger had jumped over the low roof into the middle of the square. Would it be a tiger? Or would the roof fall in upon us? Or would we just quietly expire, being breathed upon by the offended demon? They were really alarmed, and if it had not been too cold for them outside they would have stampeded; as it was I half feared they might at earliest dawn, if they survived their terrors. So I emerged, and though Judith in her wisdom besought her people not to bind the counsels of the Lord, a word I always remember in such moments, I felt I must and might, and I assured them not a hair of their heads would perish that night. Neither did it. They all awoke in health. Months afterwards I heard they explained the marvel thus: "The Demon is: It lives. But as soon as the Amma and her children came It fled from before their faces into the depths of the jungle; and It fears to return."

However that be, the village from which those men came is moving towards Christianity now; we have been asked to go and take meetings there. And of the caste-men who listened, two confessed Christ in baptism. "We will be baptised in the Forest where first we heard the Good Words," they said, and thus it was, our pastor coming up for the

purpose, to the joy of us all and of our pool to whom such a joy was new.

The bell we kept for ringing to various functions in the house. Siva's symbol (God's stone, returned to its rightful Owner) became a hearthstone to preach to every Hindu who enters the place that the gods of the nations are idols but the Lord made the heavens. And the roses and oleander and jasmine, used in the old days for garlands for the departed demon, make beautiful the house that He has given to us to set His name there.

Not . . . But

They shall not be sought for in publick council, nor sit high in the congregation. . . . But they will maintain the state of the world.—
Ecclesiasticus xxxviii. 33, 34.

CHAPTER XI

As soon as she understood about baptism the Brownie wanted to be baptised. And one glorious evening late in November, after great rain had washed the hot world and all creation sang, we went together to the nearest water, and the Iyer baptised her as he did all our converts, though he repeatedly declared he was not sent to baptise but to preach the Gospel.

It was a perfect service taken as he took it. No hint of formality in its reverence, no paralysing half reality; it was all vital, real, a visible sign and seal of the invisible. Then too, a baptism in the open air in fresh water, under evening skies, in India at any rate, is something very good. We almost heard the angels sing as we walked home together.

The matter of her name had been important to the Brownie. Her own original name was Six-faced, the name of a pleasing demon. There was therefore no question about changing it. She had a shy little under-longing to have my name, but I persuaded her out of that. It is poor enough in its

mangled English; in Tamil it is even less desirable. Consolation finally came through the translation of my second name, Beatrice, which, from the day when I pored over Dante in the Manchester Free Library and came out into the street afterwards wondering what the people who brushed past me would be like if they had seen his visions, had felt too high for me, and so had tucked itself out of sight.

Suhinie (Happiness, or Blessedness) she then became. The name fitted her, for she was a blessing to everyone she came across, though she would have been much astonished to know it, and she made a kind of sunny happiness all round her. She would have been a perfect wife and mother, but unfortunately in our district the Christians keep caste in marriage and there was not a bridegroom of Suhinie's caste. So the Church lost the greatest gift we could have helped to give it, a new true Christian home set up in its midst. Not that it minded, or minds. Caste-keeping comes far first.

How far first can only be understood by remembering how important marriage is from an Indian point of view. Witness, for example, the following petition brought to our door not long ago, by the poor Christian brother himself, a man from Travancore, miles away from us. He was perfectly sure we should feel ourselves obliged to help him to buy the required jewels, and so on. Why not?

"The bearer (followed a description of the stalwart working man) is under troubles owing to expenses of

a daughter's marriage which is to take place soon, and therefore I invite the help of every true and duty-bound Christian to meet the demands of this poor Christian brother." It was signed by the pastor of the Church.

And yet more important even than something considered so imperative that if it cannot be done on one's own money it must be done on somebody else's, is this matter of caste-keeping—the exceptions few and shining prove the rule—and never for one single moment is it questioned. Marriage is important, inevitable, imperative. Yes, but more so ten thousand times is the keeping of caste.

Still, marriage is the goal of life. Suhinie had been brought up to think so, and it had never crossed her mind that she would be unmarried. She did not break her heart, being an eminently sensible person, but being woman all through she would have pined away if she had been shut up to some dull life, and mercifully that was not necessary. The nursery work had just begun, and it held in itself enough to satisfy the latent mother in her; for it is mother-work, demanding those qualities of truth and unselfishness and patience and limitless love which shine forth in all the true mothers of the world, and it offered those sweet, secret consolations, those dearest of little human loves that return, oh so generously, all that is poured forth. Who that has known it does not bless the Love that first created the fresh, warm, ever-forgiving love of a child?

For the Brownie had come to us at the right time. A work was beginning which in the purpose of our God was to grow beyond our thoughts for it, and during those first years we were feeling our way back through innumerable obstacles to the simplicity of New Testament Christianity, to an ideal which has for its very central word, Sacrifice.

This ideal has never been wholly dead in India; disguised under many a false cover it walks about all over the land; here and there it is found in naked truth among the Hindus: among Christians, it is not more popular than it is at home.

It is not easy to write of how it worked out into practical action with us, and perhaps the less written the better. We at Dohnavur had proved that the words, "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus," were quite literally true. There was an hour, never to be forgotten, when alone in my room I faced what then seemed the utmost worst that could befall these children should no help come. Literal hunger unto death, so easy to accept for ourselves, was not easy to think of for them, and there are many practical difficulties in connection with it when it comes to the point of facing it for a family. But what was it in comparison with that other death to which, if we refused them, they were condemned? But help came. The steps of faith that day "trod

on the seeming void and found the Rock beneath."

So we had proved Him Enough for the care of the children. We were now to prove Him Comfort and Defence when the scourge of the tongue fell upon us, as it did, when the group of workers, so small when the Brownie came that we hardly knew how to compass the day's work, grew larger as one and another drawn by the love of the Lord joined us at Dohnavur.

Those who thus came knew the children could not be saved if no one were willing to lose life's usual best for their sake. They had been smitten to the heart by the wrong wrought through uncounted cruel years, they had looked at Calvary and seen that which melted the heart thus stricken. Surely if He could suffer so much they could suffer a little? And so they turned from what would have been their life, had they not felt that smiting, seen that heavenly vision; and they asked to be allowed to break through the law of their land, wise law, the land being what it is, and they said, "Let us pour out all we have at the feet of the Crucified."

Could we refuse them? Could we, dare we set limits to their love because what they asked was difficult and dangerous and new? Difficult and dangerous indeed, for India is not England. We who have been long enough in the East to become more than half-Easternised find ourselves looking with wonder at the pictures of our illustrated papers which show English girls going about safely and

freely where they will, none making them afraid. The unsafest country in Europe is safe in comparison with India; and many a black night of fear has rolled over the head of the one responsible for allowing these girls to choose, fear beside which that earlier fear of mere death for the children was as nothing. But what is faith if it is never to rise to anything but the safe and the easy? And does not our Lord sometimes call us to the new?

Just then, to our exceeding help, a little book published by the C.M.S. came to the house, a book to be read on the knees of the spirit. It was called "When God Came." We heard it was being studied and discussed. We did not find it possible to discuss it. It took us to a place where all talk ceases, and the cry of the spirit is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to *do*?"

There in that secret place, that which had seemed impossible to do was done, the group of girls and young women already in being, was fashioned into a fellowship simple but recognised as the very core of the spirit of the work at Dohnavur. And a new quickening was granted to us all, a new love.

This band of unmarried women Suhinie found entirely amazing. To work without pay (some lost all to join us, some who had a little shared it, some who had nothing received daily bread and raiment to put on, but no one wanted "pay"), this was the first astonishment.

Then the work they did: it was humble work, for from the first we took all work to be royal service;

and there was no distinction of rank, all were one. Arulai Tara, just then herself walking through fires of trial, was the oldest sister in that little group and she led the Brownie on by sheer force of bright example, till upon that simple mind great thoughts dawned, and the life purchased at such cost was spent out in service to the uttermost, as one of a band so lowly, so weak in itself, so handicapped in various ways, that there can be no fear surely that any will mistake and give to it the glory that belongs to Another. Sometimes we think our God must have been looking for something very small when He chose us to do this work for Him in India.

But such a life asks for a clear-cut separation from the things that are not of the Father. *The two lives will not mix.* And those who are seeking so to follow will feel as we feel more and more every day we live, " Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Lover of the Unlovables

> The remembrance of Josias is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is sweet as honey in all mouths, and as musick at the banquet of wine.—*Ecclesiasticus* xlix. 1.

CHAPTER XII

THE mosquitoes of the Cave proved too disciplinarian. Sella, who thoughtfully came to enquire after my welfare, suggested the Mosquito Song, and she balanced herself on one foot on a projecting stone, and began hopefully:

> I'll speak to you in Tamil, *Po*,
> Polite and pleasant Mosquito.
> I'll speak to you in English, *Go*,
> You horrid little Mosquito.
>
> And if you won't I'll shortly spill
> Your sinful little soul, and will
> Gloat on your mangled corpse, and so
> Take good advice and promptly go,
> Abominable Mosquito.

But the creatures took no notice. It was we who had to "po," and we dropped down to the Ferny Rill and found our way to the river, and sat under The Tree. He is a tree by himself. His uplifted arms seem to pierce the blue. From his branches hang the great curly ropes of the liana* we call the monkey-swing creeper from its habit of making most wonderful swings for the monkeys, who cross

**Entada Scandens.*

these tree-tops sometimes in troops of forty or fifty at a time, or perch like huge fruit in most precarious positions, or swing in their perfect swings. Great black monkeys they are, some with long tails and white caps, others with short tails tufted like lions', and big ruffles round their necks; these last huge beasts are dangerous, and attack man. A friend of ours had one which had killed a child. Sometimes the common brown monkeys come, but they are interlopers and seem to know it; this is the Black Monkeys' land, and of the two kinds the White Caps are the more interesting for they are the kind King Solomon's sailors brought to him from these parts, whose Tamil name is in the Hebrew Bible. "Whoo Whoo," they say, "Who who was he, that King who made us famous: who who?"

These monkeys seem to fear nothing except tigers. The foresters tell us they are so petrified by fear when a tiger comes, sits under their tree and grimaces and growls, that they seem unable to escape as they easily could over the roof of the forest; and sooner or later one drops to the waiting beast below. But since we watched potter-wasps putting caterpillars to sleep, and glow-worms snails, we have comforted ourselves. Must there not be other ways of which we do not know, as merciful as those of which we do know a little, by which what looks harsh is made gentle?

We experienced something of the same sort ourselves once. Some of us were coming down the hill when a snake crossed the path, and lashed out at us. I had never seen a snake attack before.

Very few do it. There was no time to recognise it; its movements were so rapid. First at me, then at one of the children, then at another it sprang, and we all stood absolutely fascinated for those few seconds, not one of us even thinking of moving. Another spring and it was in the jungle. "We weren't even frightened," said the children, and it was true. Surely the tender mercy of the Lord reaches to His creatures of the forest.

My tree—to return to him—because of the way he co-operates with his brethren and a great lichen-painted, overhanging, green-grey rock to make coolness and shade, is to me at this moment the tree of trees. High above, mixed with his foliage, streamers of his liana tendrils swing like pennons in the blue air. From these hang curved brown pods, in pairs, thirty to forty inches long, each containing a dozen or so large seeds, polished like chestnuts, perfect playthings for babies, as they are much too big to swallow and cannot be broken or bitten. These seeds we find everywhere, and carry down to the Dohnavur nurseries in basketfuls.

But his birds—all day long they whirl and flutter and sing among his branches. Sometimes there is a shoot of blue, and the fairy bluebird, that gem of creation, flashes like a jewel through the air; or it is the dear little green bulbul hard to see among the green leaves; or the woodpecker, who is always in a tearing hurry, talks rudely and hardly lets you catch a glimpse of his gorgeous colours. And all the time the river and the woods about it ring

with the grass-green barbet's kootroo-kootroo, and the whistling schoolboy's whistle rarely twice alike.

It is he who haunts mountain rivers, and whistles us awake, dear bird, half an hour before sunrise every morning, and in the evening calls us to vespers; wet or fine matters not to him. His whistle is never what the correct call perfect, so in their folly they call him the idle schoolboy, whereas he is not idle at all but always practising even if, like most of us, he never quite attains.

Then there are golden orioles and little flame-coloured and copper-coloured and withered-leaf-red and orange minivets, whole aviaries of them, and butterflies almost as large; one brought to me a moment ago measures six inches across and she is quite ordinary. These float drowsily down by the water, or to their own surprise apparently, find themselves gallivanting high in air, caught by a playful breeze.

But of all the sights my tree sees, and of all the sounds he hears, not excluding the beasts' at night, I think the most amazing is the great-hornbill's.

When first the children heard him they fled. It was like an animal noise, and a very snarling noise at that, dropping down from the sky. We could hardly believe it was a bird's, till we saw the cause of it flapping his great black and white wings and stretching out his enormous yellow beak high above the tree-tops. Always when he appears there is a rush to see him for he is a truly wonderful bird.

He frequents dense forests. In nesting time he

builds a wall round his beloved, who is comfortably ensconced in the hole in the trunk of a tree—it is our ambition to find that tree. In the wall he leaves a window, and through it he feeds her till her work is finished and the young birds can fly out.

All this my tree must know and see and hear; and something of the joy of life, this wonderful wild-wood joy seems to swing in his topmost branches, and slip down his long trunk, and touch me as I write. There is so much sadness in the world, so many hearts ache, so many tears fall, it is rather wonderful to be away for a little while in a tearless world, left just as God made it. There is something exhilarating too, in companying with these elemental things; they seem to carry one back to the beginnings, the fundamentals, the things that cannot be shaken, ancient verities of God. And to those weary of the stifling and uncertain in Oriental life, the ceaseless effort to get things done, the equally ceaseless effort to retain and to develop to ever finer perception one's sense of eternal values, to maintain sincerely the fight of faith—to such the calm strength of mountains is an uplifting, steadying thing, the pure clean joy of forests is precious, the ministry of rivers blessed healing.

Just at this moment, my river, pleased because it has been raining lately, is singing and dancing for joy. Sometimes we spend a whole day with him; climb his boulders, up which you scramble if you are young, and hoist yourself by means of a kind brown hand and a hooked stick if you are old, and he takes

you to his secret places, far, far up. Pools he keeps there, no human eyes ever saw before, little falls that catch the light and weave their spray into rainbows; fairy rainbows we call them, but angels' rainbows would be a better name, for the delighted angels must oftener enjoy them. By one of these upper reaches is a cave, cool on the hottest day, and you can sit in it and hear the gurgles of tiny runlets slipping between stones mixing with the deeper tone of the song he sings among his dripping rocks.

A great tree trunk has fallen across him just where he creeps out of the upper forest, making a kind of boundary beyond which he will not easily suffer even his personal friends to pass. This trunk is covered with orchids, for through the rainless months a mist rises up from the earth and waters the whole face of the ground, and things that love damp places grow all about, treasure new to us, and the lastrea, and blechnum and rare lovely davallia and sellaginella of our home ferneries, and, even more eagerly welcomed, the lady ferns and hart's tongues, and mosses of home. And it is all dim and green and cool; and being tropical river and wood there is always that alluring mystery of the unknown hanging over it all. One never knows what new joy may be waiting round the next boulder.

But we cannot linger long or we shall be belated. In all our climbing expeditions it is an unwritten law that we go up where we can, and trust to a friendly fortune to help us to get down. But we must leave time for it. It takes time to negotiate

what sometimes, from above at least, looks like the edge of the eaves of a house, the wall being what we have to descend. More than once we have all but had to sleep out in the woods, and as this would mean lighting a fire, a thing to be avoided in the reserved forest, we have been thankful when, somehow, anyhow, we got down before nightfall.

Sometimes we forsake our river, and make friends with the mountain that he thinks of as a father and we as the king of the hills, though he is not the highest; 5,017 feet is his registered height. Upon his summit are huge boulders naked to the winds of heaven, and the story is that on him Rama rested when he went to search for Seetha, and that he ate some fruit up there and left the kernels lying about. Nothing more likely in a land where "Bury or burn" your débris is a dictum unknown.

First, there is a belt of forest to get through as best you can, then steep open fells, if anything so uncertain as those upper grassy levels can be called fells. They have a way of dropping suddenly from under your feet, and when they drop they drop far.

From a rock up there which we call the Cathedral Rock, the house appears like a little neat doll's house, so extraordinarily neat and nice that we wonder how our clumsy selves ever got into it.

From that rock which is we reckon about 2,000 feet above the house, every word spoken by us drifts down; not shouted words, but an ordinary, "Take care, Neela, don't slip," spoken to the child next one. And the dolls belonging to the house below

hear and call out to us; and the thin little voices float up. Once one of the children started a song, "Lord, here Thy great Cathedral stands," and instantly the dolls' voices joined ours and we sang together, the voices from below floating up in the most solemn way in the great silence.

It was like listening with God. Do our words, our common everyday words, rise up like that? Is there anything to stop them from reaching very Heaven? How awful then, are words. Suddenly on that still mountain-side words lost their trifling aspect. It was stripped off them. How many words would be left unsaid if we thought of them setting forth as soon as spoken on that infinite journey through space.

But the children are seldom for long impressed by any serious reflections. The vastness of the great cathedral solemnises them for a minute or two and they listen, hushed, to the curious unfamiliar voices of their own below; for the voices are like wires for thinness, something like the voice heard through a telephone. Then tired of being quiet enough to listen they clamber off to hunt for grass orchids, warily, for a slip would mean a very long fall, and shouting so excitedly when they come upon a find that the grave old mountain wonders at their ways. Not an animal do we see though we come across their tracks. They too have heard the shouts, and disapproving have retired. But they will come back, for they know no one carries a gun here. The ravine is sanctuary to them.

But we have wandered far from my tree, and now on the other stone underneath it sits Rukma, watching the great black and blue butterflies flickering up-stream.

" Rukma, what do you remember of Suhinie ? "

" She was fatter than the rest of us and could not run as well, but she used to come and join our races, and take it so good-naturedly if we laughed." Thus Rukma the athlete, who runs like the wind and dives like a kingfisher, and knows nothing out of reach in the world of joyous physical activities. But Rukma had other remembrances. " Afterwards when she was a nurse, if there was a poor, thin, cross baby anywhere, she took to that baby, and loved it, and played with it till it got happy. That's what I remember best of her." And she added, " If she did anything wrong she was sorry at once."

For the Brownie was not perfect ; though indeed she was to be quickly perfected. She had little flaws of temper, in spite of her exceeding good-nature. But as Rukma says, she was sorry at once. And after all this book does not profess to be more than the slightest of life-sketches. It does not poke into all the holes and corners of our Brownie girl's existence ; there is hardly time for that. But if it did we should meet nothing worse than, if she did anything wrong she was sorry at once ; and Preena who was the small, charming but distinctly wilful Elf when the Brownie reigned in the nursery, remembers her thus : " She was the sister who never was cross," for as Ponnammal once put it in speaking

of her devotion to an unattractive baby, "she was a lover of the unlovables."

What an affliction a sense of the comical is: even as I write this more or less serious chapter, the remembrance of a toilsome day when the forest house was being built, attacks me.

We were trying hard to get the roof on and tiled before the monsoon rain was due. Premonitory thunderstorms had begun and the roof had stuck: for the carpenters depended on the wood sawyers, and these again on the wood fellers, and these on their coolies, and these last had failed to appear, having a feud with the head carpenter, a most unsatisfactory person, so that all down the line there was confusion. The stone and mud walls were of course open to the weather; we were trying to get them covered with cocoanut mats brought up for the purpose, were indeed in the middle of forking up the slippery things to the men on the tops of the walls, when a coolie arrived from Dohnavur.

There seemed no urgent reason why he should have been sent, and four annas of apparent waste troubled my spirit, already tired by the mishaps here, but here he was; so I gave up forking mats and sat down resignedly to make the best of the unnecessary coolie. And this cutting from our daily paper fell out of the first letter I opened from the bungalow:

"The Great Poetic Movement in India proceeds apace. Its latest adherent is Dr. F., etc., etc., author of etc., etc., issued by the Bardic Brother-

hood. In a composition entitled 'Britannia and Mother Hind,' he triumphantly proves that the East is more spiritual than the West, thus :—

> O pardon me, Britannia sister mine,
> The Indians have a great spiritual shine :
> In morals mine is a higher code than thine.

Although a serious critic of British administration, he recognises that the great heart of the British democracy is sound, and he is able to represent Britannia as saying eventually :—

> Let us now hope that Indians' needs at once
> Shall answered be, so that th' Empire British
> Be stronger and consolidated well,
> Of grievance there be not the slightest smell.

But, whether because we are reactionary or for some other reason, we prefer Dr. P. in the mood of 'The Angel in the House.' For example :—

> Of friends, relations all,
> A mother's love is best, . . .
> At baby's rhymeless squall
> She takes it to her chest."

That paragraph cleared the air, though how, perhaps only the Maker of us could explain, and now shall do duty for describing in a way I could never attain unto, this dear little Brownie of ours.

> " At baby's rhymeless squall
> She took it to her chest."

Tiger Pugs

They fought with gladness the battle of Israel.—
1 *Maccabees* iii. 2, R.V.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME years ago, when we were very needy indeed, an English girl who had read of the temple children of India offered to come to us. She seemed keen and loving, and arrangements were made for her training with a view to her coming out if she proved to be truly called to us.

She was not, and therefore never came. Part of her training was of a sort she thought too ordinary and humdrum for anyone going to be a missionary. When she was asked what she supposed we wanted her for, she said she expected to skirmish round with me and raid temple houses, and carry the children off to Dohnavur. A fine life it sounded, most exciting, a sort of border-foray existence only unfortunately not in the very least ours. Government would have something to say to it, if it were.

It is true that many a time we have been tempted to wish things were a little so. It is hard to see the dear little children playing about in the temple house courts, or swinging in their hammocks from the rafters of the inner rooms in the temple houses, without wishing, but wishing is too cool a word, without just burning to carry them off that very

minute and set them playing in our far happier gardens or swinging in other hammocks in the big open porches which are the healthful delight of the Dohnavur nurseries. But to do anything of the sort would not be right, and that settles it. That it would not be possible is another and lesser matter; and yet sometimes it has happened that we have done what if told in a certain way might sound extremely like it, though there was always a difference which made it possible and right.

Only, and here the English girl was quite out of her reckoning, it is never we white people who do these things, that would be to defeat our own purpose; we are far too conspicuous in daylight at any rate to be any good at raids. No; to us belongs the humbler part of inspiring others to do.

Such a raid once fell to the Brownie's lot, to her mingled fear and joy.

Six miles from Dohnavur is a temple town; that town is given up to idolatry, feasts and festivals are frequent, the people seem to live to gad about, to use an expressive old word. So of course the temple houses are well supported, and the brightest of children are there. Over and over again we had tried to get some of those children, but never up to the date of this chapter had got one.

Truly our God does often seem to choose things that are not to bring to nought things that are. The things that are in that temple could not be plainly told. A private document in connection with it was once brought to me, and I read in it of

little girls known to us who had been sold to people known to us, our own near neighbours; men no wickeder than most, but utterly infamous and conscienceless where those little girls were concerned. To be a temple child means cruelty. It means a worse thing, even the turning of that child's mind from all that is good to all that is bad: it means killing the soul. And of all killings in the whole world, that is the worst.

We had been trying to get a little girl before this killing process was completed. She was only thirteen; but she was ready to run all the six miles alone at night (for of course she could not come by day), if only she could get to us.

Legally, we could not have kept her if she had; but we would have tried; we would have fought for her, whatever happened; we could not have given hér up if she had dared so much to reach us. But first, there would almost certainly have been a riot in that town as an I.C.S. friend told me very seriously; and secondly, a lawsuit, with no human chance of winning; for we could have proved nothing against those who would have called themselves the child's own relatives and had any number of witnesses to "prove" their new-made facts. Back of it all would have been the age-old system of this ancient land; and back of that the devil. These are some of the things that are. The things that are not? But they are too small to talk about.

The child did not escape, her plan was discovered and she disappeared. We never knew what became

of her and probably never shall. This, which had happened just before the day Ponnammal and the Brownie went to that town, made everything a little more difficult. The reason they went was that we had heard of a young child there whose mother was willing to give it to us. Such a thing is rare and we knew all manner of influences would be brought to bear upon her to make her change her mind. But we hoped.

The interruptions to a forest book are almost as many as to a book in the plains. But somehow they do not seem to disturb. They fit into it, slip into it, become part of it. Tara and her set have departed. Bala and hers have arrived, and at this moment comes Bala, with a large leaf-ful of something carefully laid thereon, a tiger's pug, unmistakable, every toe clear. Early this morning she and Jullanie went down the wood and came across the spoor, and to their delight were able to scoop up the slab unbroken to bring up to show to me.

Here it lies beside me on the stone which serves as table, the surface of the large pad of the foot is clear, no little earth-castes tell of the work of small worms in the night, so that it is probably an early morning footprint. Also, no leaves lay on it when they found it, Bala says, though they were thick all round it. The tiger then must have passed through our wood not very long ago. Interesting all this, and pleasantly exciting in broad daylight. But in the grey dawn or at night ? And it is always night where human tigers be.

Under suave smiles they were hiding now, as Ponnammal and the Brownie entered their town. They had heard of the proposed visit and its purpose, and had determined to come between us and that little child, their lawful possession; for the child had been all but dedicated, and they were of the priestly caste.

Ponnammal and Suhinie reached the house, they hoped unobserved; not so; they were watched. The house stood in a back street, quiet and unremarkable, with its bare walls turned to the road, and opening inside upon a courtyard. In the verandah hung the white hammock with the baby asleep in it; the Brownie pushed the white stuff aside and looked in. Is there anything more heart-drawing than a sleeping babe? The thought of all that lay before it, if they failed, now swept over them and every string of purpose in them was tuned to one deep note of longing to save that child.

But they found the mother had been tampered with. She had previously vowed the little one to the temple by way of expiation for the death of her husband, and then she had come in touch with one of our friends who had persuaded her out of this; but to take back a child once all but dedicated and keep it herself was against the feeling of her kind; moreover, it might be unsafe, provoking the wrath of the god. If we had the baby, she would be safer, for then that wrath might be expected to fall on us; this at least is the curious reasoning one gets at if one goes deep enough. So that the mother had come to be almost eager to give her child to us,

and Ponnammal and the Brownie had gone full of hope, though we know well there is many a slip between a hope and its fulfilment in India.

But now the mother was cold. In the house next hers, was at that moment a pleasant-faced, grandmotherly-looking old dame, head of the chief temple house in the town; she was waiting for the child. And she purred to herself as she waited like a cat sure of its mouse. The two houses communicated with each other by way of an inner courtyard. Ponnammal did not know this till afterwards.

At last the mother yielded to Ponnammal, realising afresh some little of what lay behind the specious promises on which she had been fed; and instantly by unseen means word was sent to the men.

Presently they came, not apparently the least concerned, or come on purpose, but just friends drifting in, by pleasant accident. They were surprised to find Ponnammal there, and very much pleased, having heard of our "good works, doubtless much reward will accrue."

While they talked the cat purred. The mother, though not a word was said to her or any notice taken of her, drew back; the long, long tussle began all over again.

And all this time the little Brownie prayed. That was her one work. She was Ponnammal's aide-de-camp, with only one thing to do, and she did it faithfully. Ponnammal told us afterwards she could *feel* the Brownie's prayers, feel them working.

At last the mother inclined to Ponnammal; the

men had sauntered in and out all this time, there was no way of getting rid of them: now seeing the prey slipping from them they showed their claws, turned on the meek inoffensive Brownie, and ordered her off, poured torrents of wrath on Ponnammal, and scathing denunciations on the mother, snarled at her, Ponnammal said, hissed at her, utterly confounded her.

But Ponnammal and the Brownie had resources of which they knew nothing, and they fought their battle far out of sight of the angry men. What happens round about us and above us when such fights are fought? If we could see, what should we see? Gradually there was a sense of rest in turmoil, the men drew off, the mother overwhelmed at first, suddenly pulled herself together, all but flung the baby to Ponnammal, and said, "Take her. Preserve her from evil."

Then did Ponnammal and Suhinie fly. In two minutes they were in the bullock-cart, and off.

For weeks it was uncertain what would happen. Men of that type count among life's sweetest joys a case in the law courts. We had to risk that for the baby's sake, not for the first time or the last, and there were moments when the thought of the innocent, easily mystified Brownie in the witness box, as chief witness against Ponnammal and me, had terrors. But she was spared that, and so were we. We named the baby after her. Suhina has the same meaning as Suhinie, and though it was by no means an Unlovable, she took it to her chest.

A Woman or Some Such Thing

But . . . they are Thine, O Lord, Thou lover of souls.—*Wisdom* xi. 26.

CHAPTER XIV

THE loris still survives, and becomes more and more interesting. He has just now breakfasted, and is engaged in slowly sucking his fingers, much as a baby might. But he looks wiser far than any babe. Bala has offered to take care of him to-day "so that you may get on with your work," as she kindly explains. What useful things babies are when they grow up.

Our forest house has four rooms—three bedrooms, and one, called by the masons " the harl," is everything a room can be. It is there we gather in the evening when it is cool enough to require a fire; (cold it rarely is, we have open windows always, and sometimes it is hot, 92° and thereabouts, but the fire makes the hall such a welcoming cosy place that on the slightest pretext we have it, wood being of no consequence here).

When the Ranger and his people were up it rained. They were in tents, and we could not happily think of them so uncomfortable and invited them in, quite against the rules of the house, but

they are both nice, inoffensive, oldish men, and they camped thankfully in our little Prophet's chamber, and pondered over the sentences on the wall, put there to refresh the tired-hearted who occasionally inhabit that room: "He comforteth them that are losing patience. . . . For as His majesty is, so also is His mercy."

In the evening we sat round the fire and drew the Ranger and his foresters to tell us forest stories. Such stories do not feel worth writing down; but heard in that long brown room—for its walls are plastered with earth and sand worked into a kind of distemper—with the firelight flickering on the brown coils of the monkey swings thrown over the rafters, twisting fantastic shadows on the walls and the red-tiled roof and red-tiled floor, and touching with bright reflections the glass panes of the quaint little bookcases, full of a mixed multitude of books, and the bowls of jasmine on the tables which are curious shaped slabs cut straight from a forest tree, and the dresser with its blue china, and the fawn-coloured tips of the sambur's antlers which, as Tara observed when first they were put up, "do with the curly swings make the room into like part of the forest"—heard thus the stories were all alive and walked about by themselves.

It was a calm evening and the young moon glimmered on a very still forest, so still that we could hear the forest noises coming through the open windows, the bark of the spotted deer which never fails to make us feel real children of the woodland,

and the little almost similar call of a night-bird flying past. We forgot about bed, forgot the great world outside with its agitations and vexations, kingdom rising against kingdom, trouble chasing trouble's heels, forgot everything but the lure of the primeval forest at our doors, where though death reigns, life is singularly care-free. Sometimes we see the big grey form of a sambur emerging slowly from the darkness of the wood above our house, out upon one of the little open places where the grass is yellowing; there the quiet thing will browse, as if no tiger ever were; if we exclaim, as the juvenile part of us seems unable to refrain from doing, there will be a quiet glance of enquiring eyes, a flicker of long ears, and then an imperceptible dissolving of grey into green. You do not see the sambur go. You only see him gone.

The children led off that evening with a rollicky nonsense song sung to a mad tune which rises an octave higher with each repetition. Its equally mad words cheer our souls on the dullest day. Another which the children now produced is made up of the tale the Ranger himself told them, and I rather wondered how he would take the joke.

The story tells how he and his six subordinates were out together in the forest "when suddenly from one of them proceeded a piercing scream,"

> "'A tiger? Oh what did you do?'
> And he did smile and say,
> 'Why, what do you expect we did?
> *We more or less ran away,*'"

and the chorus prolongs the " more or less ran away " which always finally collapses in laughter.

I watched the old Ranger's face, as they sang, but I need not have been anxious. Both he and his nice old forester beamed like grandfathers, not in the least seeing the point of the joke and so not being pricked by it.

The laugh over, the forester observed gravely, " Doubtless it was the right thing to do ; probably it not being a man-eater. Now with that species there is but one suitable course to pursue." And he told us that it is necessary to stand still till the instant the beast springs, then swerve aside, and he will plunge into the jungle and not return, for you at any rate, though he may for your companion, for a tiger never turns to spring again after a miss. It sounded easy enough, but unpleasant as an experience.

And by way of corroboration, the forester told us of a man-eater who had eaten " a woman or some such thing " and was finally shot by an Englishman. Two hunters went out that night, each made his machan (platform of boughs tied up among the branches of a tree wherein the hunter sits and watches for the tiger to return to his kill, or if a bait is fastened below for him to spring on it). Each had an unfortunate dog for bait.

The first shot missed, and the tiger missed his spring and slunk off.

After a while he returned for the other dog, and was hit. Poor dogs and poor tiger. But man-

eaters are impossible. "I myself have never been in such great danger from tigers. From monkeys, ah much," added the forester, and encouraged to proceed on what sounded an alluring path he told a blood-curdling tale. He was alone one day in the forest, when he heard the war-cry of the lion-tailed monkeys; the fierce beasts were all but on him, grimacing and showing their sharp teeth. Once on him, a whole troop of them together, he knew he would be torn to shreds, he had no gun, only a knife, and it would be almost useless. So he stopped, picked up stones happily lying near, and hurled them at the creatures, who gave way for a minute, and he tore along the forest path towards safety. On they came again, and again he found stones to throw, three times they came on thus, and each time he repulsed them with stones, till at last with a wild spurt he got clear of the forest and was safe.

But of all wise beasts a rogue elephant is wisest in his furies. A herd of elephants does no mischief. You may watch them graze, they won't harm you, they will go away if they see you, frightened by the sight of a human. But a rogue (one turned out of the herd) he, poor beast, is too miserable to be frightened. He will attack, he will chase, he will watch his victim climb a tree, then go, fill his trunk with water. "Why?" exclaimed the children for whom this was almost too much. "To loosen the roots so that he may be able to butt it down," was the astonishing answer.

"But if the tree is too big?"

"Then he will wait till the man comes down."

This, the spectacle of the man up the tree and the elephant below, created a long diversion as every separate child wanted to tell what she would do if she were a man in similar circumstances. And then they having the field for the moment told their tales, of which they have a fair stock by this time.

They told of the monkey, the White Cap, one of King Solomon's sort, who showed two of them the way home when they were far in the wood and were not sure of it; and of the tiger who dashed down the bank like a big cat, taking no notice of their two accals on the path, and of that other tiger who walked round their nurseries one night at Dohnavur, when they were asleep on the verandah, without even sniffing one of them (both tigers were seen later, one being in his own world went his ways in peace; the other poor beast was shot); and of the panther which came round our forest house one night, making a noise like a sawyer in a sawpit sawing timber. And of that other panther who stood long enough for their sittie, who was going down the wood one early morning, to see quite perfectly his beautiful markings and clear green eyes. And of the python our servant found and captured, it being sleepy after a meal of deer.

These things and many more they told, and the talk streamed on till at last we remembered to-morrow and went to bed.

And all the time that little unintended phrase in the forester's first story was running in and out of my head, " A woman or some such thing " ; and when the talk ended and the children lay asleep, each in her scarlet blanket, sleeping the sleep of peace, those words took me by the hand and led me to strange places.

I saw again the temples to which they were to have belonged, those hateful temples with their huge towers and ancient tremendous masonry, their secret ways, their cruel ways, and the solid age-old feeling of Hindustan behind. What did it matter how many little woman-children those ways ensnared, those stone walls smothered ? " A woman or some such thing," what mattered it what befell her ? And yet in another way it mattered. Come between the tiger and his prey, even though she be only a woman or some such thing. Try to drag that morsel of prey away. Then see what will happen.

And the Dohnavur nurseries, and many other places where hard fights are being fought, came to mind then, and I rejoiced as I remembered what the children mean to the Lord Who redeemed them, they are not " things " to Him.

As it Was, and Is, but shall not ever Be

> The heart of the inhabitants shall be changed, and turned into another meaning. For evil shall be put out, and deceit shall be quenched. As for faith, it shall flourish, corruption shall be overcome, and the truth, which hath been so long without fruit, shall be declared.—2 *Esdras* vi. 26, 27, 28.

CHAPTER XV

In the seventeenth century there was, we read, an extraordinary kind of commerce in children. A set of men existed in Europe, even in England, who bought little children, drugged them, and then by divers secret means known to those who practised the wicked art, changed them. Changed their forms, if mountebanks were wanted; kneaded their features, and so dealt with them that they were for ever spoiled, if things to laugh at were required.

In the reign of William and Mary this iniquity was stopped. The men and women who did such things were hunted out of England. Now it is almost forgotten that such a crime ever existed.

In the East something similar to this has been, in various shapes throughout all time. In India it is going on to-day, only instead of mutilating the faces of children, it is their minds and spirits that are dealt with, till what was innocent and lovable is

turned to the contrary. And this is a trade, a commerce, premeditated. It is part of a huge system; it is that which we exist to fight.

Here in this peaceful place of mountains and forests and clean glad waters, it is quite difficult to realise what lies on the other side of the mountains, and down and all round about us on the plains. And yet our forest house is so situated that we can never quite forget. From its porch, we can all but see into a temple known to us in its every intricate corridor, a wicked dark place. Through our open windows in festival times come the glimmer of its lights and the sound of its tom-toms. From the rocks above we can count five or six temple towers, each the centre of a system stretching to the east where by the sea great temples rise; and over the mountains to the west where, in the beautiful Travancore country, things go on that are never told in books; and south, to Ceylon, connected by invisible lines across the sea with this same traffic; and to the north how far only God and the good angels and bad demons know. So even here we cannot ever forget why we are in India, and our forest life is in its way as much part of the warfare of life as any other part.

Among the Brownie's nurslings was one from the west; forests of palms surrounded her home, forests like seas of dark green palm. Backwaters, dreams of beauty; broad, shallow, lovely rivers; quaint old-world towns and villages, make the land beautiful. But Eden was beautiful, mere beauty does

not keep out serpents ; a serpent in the shape of a very evil man on the watch for little children, found this child at play among the palm trees, decoyed her away, and disappeared with her.

He reappeared on our side of the mountains, a devout worshipper at a particularly famous temple, and now the child had a new "mother," who attended her everywhere.

If Zora's own poor mother could have seen her then what would she have felt ? Zora had cried for her mother ; she had been punished by being burned with a red-hot blade of a knife. She had tried to run away ; they had drugged her then, so that she could not run.

It was night, "pin-drop silence" as the book afore quoted puts it. The festival had not begun properly yet, or it would have been far from pin-drop in that crowded town. Most people, tired out after long journeying, were asleep. Near by ran a wide river, on whose stone platforms many slept within a foot or two of the water. It was full now, the south-west monsoon had turned it from a hot sandy waste with a trickle in its heart, to a glorious, broad tide, strong enough to sweep down an elephant as a straw to the sea. But it had risen to its highest and the sleepers stretched themselves on the stone calmly, though many a man had been washed off those same platforms in the time of the rising of the river.

On the farther side of the river, quietly moved through the darkness an old woman and a man. Alone awake in that sleeping town they walked

fearlessly but very quietly in and out of its lanes, and on to its great central temple. Here they stopped. The man went first, cautiously threading his way through the white-sheeted forms spread about like corpses on the ground, till he reached a certain low window, then he beckoned to the woman.

Agile as a cat was that old woman. In one moment she was through the window, left unbarred by some blessed mistake. Down she dropped into the little dark room, picked up a child sleeping near, touched the woman, the child's reputed mother, and beckoning to her, with the power of all heaven in that sign, she handed the child out through the window to the man who was waiting, climbed out herself, and was followed by the other, who walked as a woman walks in her sleep.

Much had happened between that first carrying off of little Zora, and this. But the middles of stories are often tedious and sometimes not very profitable, so Zora's is one of beginning and end only.

The end, which however was really a happy beginning, began at Dohnavur a few days later. At first it seemed anything but happy; Zora was ill, terrified, lifeless; we almost feared those cruel manipulating hands had spoiled the poor little four-year-old mind beyond repair. For two whole years we feared it, but we do not fear it now, and among the first of the many healing influences which in the end wrought such a change that Zora is now one of

our merriest as well as keenest workers for other children, was the Brownie's faithful love.

How she loved that desolate morsel, petted her, played with her, comforted her, was a little child with her. With such a little child she was in her element, and in a work like ours such a worker never need be idle. Even as I write a tiny boy has been brought (for because those traffickers in children take boys as well as girls, we too do so now), and I hear he is more pitiful even than Zora was, though he has what she had not at first, a very sweet smile.

So the happy years passed, and the Brownie learned to pray with us as we prayed the prayer of the fighting sailor, "Make it appear that Thou art our Saviour, and mighty Deliverer." *Make it appear;* it will not so appear unless children are mightily delivered. Deliver them then, O Christ, our Lord.

Running Water

A SONG FOR ONE IN LIKE TEMPTATION.

No, not for you He thirsted as He died :
No, not for you my Lord was crucified ;
Woods, streams, and mountains, innocent are ye :
Not yours, but mine, the shame of Calvary.

And dear as ye must be to Him, ye trees,
And running waters in your purity,
To heart that broke to save them, dearer these,
Sons of a poor undone humanity.

O stainless things, I would not love you less,
How could I, you being what you are to me ?
But I would love th' unlovable, confess
Mankind as something more beloved than ye.

Give me Thy thirst : kindle, O Christ, Thy fire,
Passion of fire, and love's sincerity ;
My wild-wind harp, take, make of it a lyre
Whose music shall win men to turn to Thee.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT does running water do for one ? I do not know. It does different things at different times. Be tired, be disturbed in mind, feel for the moment out of harmony with your forest world, and it flows over you, whispers little unrepeatable things to you, cools certain little unsuitable heats, "gentles" you all over. For of one thing I am very sure, it knows the way into the inward parts of its lovers, and it knows how to soothe till all is comforted and composed.

We call our creamy sweet-scented flower which grows in water-lands, Meadow-sweet. River-sweet should be the name for this sense of all deliciousness known nowhere but by running water.

Two days ago when Lavana, Kumarie, and Mala were coming up attended by a trusty servant, they saw to their surprise, squatting by the River of Rest, which is our name for the river when it first meets us in the hot lower jungle, a large man in a shiny black coat, sure sign of a certain profession much affected in India.

Now Indian etiquette demanded that he of the coat should be blind to our girls, and they to him. They were passing on when he called after them, "Ho you, I am coming to see your Amma. Will she give me milk and bread? I cannot eat your other food, but I can eat that and shall require it. Also will she put me and my servants up? I shall require that also."

But the girls had seen what had hurt them sorely. Just as they came up, the large man's servant, riding a poor little hack pony which he was thrashing mercilessly, had passed them. They heard as they passed the reason for the thrashing. The pony had spilled his master on the path; or in other words, his master being loosely put together had slipped off, and the pony had not raised so much as a hoof to help him. Therefore he was to be beaten all the way down the hill, whence the servant was to hasten to fetch a dhooley and

carriers so that the aggrieved one might be carried up in comfort.

Also the girls knew their manners, and were not going to forget them, so with the briefest word in Tamil they went on. "Can you not speak English to *me*?" he called after them. They took no notice, beyond another quiet word in Tamil. Then he tackled the servant. "Hai! Has your mistress soda water? Will she arrange for my convenience when I come up?" The poor man was nervous. Brahmanhood was oozing out of every inch of the large man, and he, the servant, was as dust under his feet; so he fumbled out that as I had a house it might be all would be as was desired (forgetting there were already twenty in it), but as to soda water, he was unable to promise, there being unfortunately none.

When the little party reached the house and I heard all this, I sent down to assure the Brahman he had made a mistake. We were not in a position to offer either to him or his the hospitality he demanded. And I hoped that was the last we should hear of him; for to open the gates of our ravine to such would be to end all privacy, and even safety for the girls and the children.

But no, on a peaceful Sunday morning, in the midst of the Sabbath quiet, like a stone falling plump into a clear still pool, the Brahman dropped upon us.

The first I knew of it was the sound of a scramble down the steep path leading to my tree and the

cook-boy's rather startled voice announcing, "A Brahman has come to see you, and with him many men, and he himself is very fat." And I knew it must be the same.

"Ask him to come here."

"Here?" There was much doubt in the boy's voice; the great of the earth are usually entertained in bungalows.

"Yes, here." For I knew Preena and Leela were in the house at that moment, and thought it as well to let it be clearly understood it was a woman's house.

Presently there was the sound of small stones rolling excitedly down the path, and a good deal of puffing, and then the large smiling face of the gentleman in black broke through the surprised green of the bushes, and rounded the grey rocks. Never before had they seen such as he.

He dropped heavily on the other stone under my tree, and the tree looked down and wondered. He did not look at it, saw nothing to look at, did not hear the river's music, only his own weary grunts as he settled himself on that uncomfortable stone, and he visibly mildly marvelled at the taste of the mad English who, some of them at least, prefer stones and wild woods to chairs and respectable houses. And the birds, their feelings ruffled, flew away.

I could not either sincerely or wisely receive him with any particular warmth. I had the mishandled pony in mind, and the girls so impolitely accosted

in the wood. Also by coming in this unannounced way he had again broken his own country's rules. It is well known that we of Dohnavur follow Indian customs in so far as they are good and possible; our Indian dress, little simple sign of our kinship with the women of India, would be a mere farce and wholly useless, and even hindering, if we ignored the customs of women. Alone as we are, a company of women in the midst of a large Hindu population, we have over and over again proved the helpfulness of a careful observance. All this the Brahman knew. Finally it was our holy day, which fact he also knew, and he knew our habits. For not one single thing connected with the ordering of our lives is unknown to the people about us. We live in glass houses in India.

I reminded him,then, of the laws he had transgressed, and he apologised till the oil flowed; then observed that the day was hot and he was thirsty

Now a big, luscious, middle-aged man without a firm line anywhere in him, and self-indulgence written all over him, is not a tender plant. So, taking it for granted that of course he could not drink of our drinks or out of our vessels, I suggested the river.

"Shall *I* drink of *it*?" was his answer as amazed he turned his great face upon me. "*I* of *it*," and feeling it was really too much to ask the river to allow him, I offered milk if he did not mind the inevitable contamination. There was no one to see, no one that is who counted, and so he con-

descended, and I asked the cook-boy who had lingered politely to bring a cup of milk.

"Stand aside!" was the word to the boy, when he returned with the milk. "Stand aside!" This in the tone a badly brought up hippopotamus might conceivably use in addressing vermin; and the boy, feeling his worminess, retired hastily. Then the Brahman, making a long arm, gingerly accepted the milk, poured it down his throat without touching the cup, in the clever Indian fashion, and with a lordly, "Here, take it," dropped it neatly into the humbly outstretched hand. "Rama!" he exclaimed with a deep sigh as he did it. Perhaps he was apologising.

And I sat still on my stone, and said all sorts of reproving things to myself; for once the large man had accepted our milk he had become in a way our guest, and I did not like to dislike him. But it was no good. I could only think of a text in the Apocrypha: "O how desirable are the works of the Lord,"—and how undesirable this man's.

And now he proceeded to business, or rather attempted to do so, but found to his consternation that our laws regarding our holy day were as inflexible as his own (not that he would have minded talking business on his, but other things would be taboo). And he tried to skate over the awkwardness by a few well-chosen compliments and failed; and he tried to sail round it, and failed, and at last desisted, feeling sick.

I knew his business before he began. Briefly

it was a quarrel which had gone to the law courts, over "who was to bow to whom," which, that is, of the two disputants was the greater religious celebrity. Three times I had been approached about it and three times had refused to touch it. It concerned Government, whose action it was hoped might be influenced by "a little letter" attesting to the virtues of the one who claimed to be chief holiest. "Unlike many others," as a note written to me by a local official assured me, "he is a man learned and cultured, and full of public charities" (a word intended delicately to hint at much), "and occupies a position so unique, that," etc., etc.

In vain had I tried to explain to the three previous messengers that Government minded its own business and missionaries theirs; that it would not be in the least gratified to receive the "little letter," would in fact be more annoyed than otherwise; that not knowing the one who claimed the pre-eminence I could say nothing about him, it not being our way to write guarantees to unknown qualities; and that altogether, I could do nothing.

After a contemplative pause, the large man tried what the wise Tamil calls "face-praise." Now this is impossible anywhere, but in the forest it was quite dreadful. I felt ashamed for my tree to hear it, and the clean, clean river; so with what must have seemed the most barbaric lack of appreciation of the good things of life I cut it short, and tried to reach what might still remain of the soul of the man, only to be interrupted by those oiled

tones, as the one matter that mattered was slipped in again under a new skin.

Three times out of a possible three hundred have I broken my rule of refusing these coveted "little letters," and the last of the three was fresh in my mind and stiffened my present "No." The applicant, brought by a leading Christian, was a young man, a Mohammedan, from a near town, and his argument, "Madam, having proceeded to Failed B.A." (quite a good degree here) "in Government college, I think it least thing Government can do is to give me billet" struck me as so reasonable that I weakly yielded; for if a paternal Government will persist in educating to Failed B.A. it hardly seems fair to turn the product on to a cold world which by that time may not know what to do with it.

So I wrote that though I did not personally know this lad he came of good folk, his people being the most respectable in the village—a fact; and not affected by the discovery made a week later, that at that very hour the aforesaid family was giving cover to a man wanted by the police for the trifling sin of slaying another, the slayer of course being a relative. My note remained quite true; but somehow I felt it a mistake. So, reinforced by this and other strong reasons, I held out under that most wearisome application, oiled conversation, impossible without churlishness to end.

Now I knew that the man and his powerful clique could greatly hinder us in our search for children, one word from a similarly offended man had years

ago closed hundreds of houses, and inside those houses were children in peril; so all through this interview, had been the little, quiet appeal to a Greater than he, "Suffer him not to hurt us: let not a single child perish because of this." One does not live for long in India, the real India unknown to dwellers in that other more westernised India which is the shell of the real, without learning much of possibilities in such connections. And the eyes that watched me across the stone though apparently seeing nothing, saw all, knew what I knew might be.

At last convinced that his really toilsome and expensive journey had been in vain the poor Brahman ponderously arose. His farewells were effusive, and his face never lost its smiling creases, but he had less control over his back, and as he stumbled up the path (how he must have hated that steep little path) the whole of him was just one mass of disgust.

And as he went, all in me was much distressed; for to the foolish stuff used in the making of some of us, to say "No" to any breathing thing is an uncomfortable experience, and I felt rude all over. Then, too, who could care for India without thinking troubled thoughts as the vision arose of such as this man anywhere near the helm of events before the great lesson had been learned that to rule means to serve. And who can say that this lesson has been learned?

Not that all who seek that power are like this one.

There are of course some of very different calibre, but they are exceptional. What wonder then that the peasants of India, and the great mass of the people generally, dread the day when the white hand goes. Never does a Government official come to our bungalow at Dohnavur but dozens of the surrounding villagers, scenting out the blessed fact, come beseeching us to let them have speech with him. "He will be just," is their one word. "He will do justice."

And no sooner has the motor reeled out of our drive on to the village street, than we see it stop, for the best sort of Englishman is the kindest-hearted man on earth, and we know a petition is being thrust before his eyes, maybe false but as likely true, by some poor wretch who has wasted half his substance, and plunged his posterity in debt to get justice in one or in fifty native tribunals. If only the white man will give it five solid minutes' consideration, he believes somehow it will prosper in the end.

And finally, when I thought of that man as he once was, a nice, sincere baby in his hammock, and then grievingly of what man has made of man, I felt it was worth everything to give our God the chance to make something very different. And I rejoiced in the thought of the little lads now in the Dohnavur nursery, boys of the selfsame stock, the kind so hard to win, and of whom so few have been won after the formative influences of life have had time to play upon them.

But the Brahman had left a feeling behind him, it took the river an hour or more to wash that greasy feeling off. I felt as if I ought to apologise to the clean good world about me for this unlovely intrusion of mine. For after all his world is mine, trying though it be to admit it, and the call to the forest to which thousands of little voices within respond so eagerly is, rightly heard, a call to come apart awhile in order to return the keener to that other world where the need is, because there only is the sin.

Two happy butterflies are honeymooning in the still blue air above the river, the birds have come back, all the green leaves of all the green trees are busy about their work and I am at peace with my forest world, forgiven for being a human, taken into its heart again, and it is the river's doing, even now it is murmuring words of quietness, singing its unforgettable songs, washing the last little worrying dust off me. O praised be the Maker of all running waters, for every caressing way in them, and praised be the kindness that makes such places as this in the world, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.

Of the Self-same Stock

Now therefore I bow the knee of mine heart.—
The Prayer of Manasses.

CHAPTER XVII

CRASH and scuffle among the tree tops, then a spring of that huge black creature, the monkey of these forests, white-capped, long-tailed, big as a middle-sized man. Down he leaps from branch to branch, and as his tree is high this takes two or three seconds. Then there is a single wild vault across an unbelievable void to the opposite side of the ravine, where upon another tree top he resumes his interrupted breakfast. A minivet, blood scarlet, and another glowing orange, flicker among the leaves, or are they autumn leaves alive? That jewel of joy, the fairy bluebird, dressed in black and blue, with babies in attendance in pure electric, flashes across the valley, showing bright against the darker blue of the precipitous hills. Up in the rain-filled sky the swifts dart about like little pictures of aeroplanes. Two rainbows are lying on the mountains; two waterfalls leap sheer several hundred feet, and the rainbows are so laid that each has caught a fall and painted it. A rainbow seen close to, against forests and water and mountains, is quite another thing from one seen against distant sky. The colours show in

a different way. We are at the rainbow's foot, place of dreams and fairy fancies, the place every eager child wants to find.

* * * * * *

Here I am, but here I am not. "Not where I breathe but where I love I live," not where I breathe but where I was I am. I see again things seen for the first time only a month ago.

It was night in the great Indian city, far from its pleasant places were we, an Indian sister and I, down in the deeps of the city among its buried old temples let into the streets, its curious endless maze of bazaars, blind alleys, drain-lined lanes. There were crowds everywhere, but not a white face had we seen for hours.

Down a side street we walk, inconspicuous among the people, turn into an odorous yard where small boys are thumping a tom-tom. We glance at them, but not so as to attract attention; they are among the boys we have come to seek, but they are the most easily found. Here they are in the open, dark-skinned little lads, happy in their tom-tom beating, cracking jokes with one another, stopping when they feel inclined to play, but soon resuming their exciting business, tom-tom, tom-tom, tom-a-tom, tom-tom.

We pass them, buy two second class tickets ("No need to waste eight annas more on first, second are nearly as good," whispers my companion), ask when the performance of the night is to begin, find that we have some time to spare, and wonder how

it should be spent. Swings through me then quite a new thought: "Where do the children live?" I ask the ticket seller. Having no idea of our identity he tells us, and we are off before he has time to discover it.

Through an intricate tangle of streets we run, our double rickshaw blundering through the crowd like a beetle bent on business among a swarm of ants. The rickshaw coolie knows his city, every runlet among these countless arteries of streets is familiar to him. At last he stops before a big ordinary looking house in an ordinary street. The door is open. Without stopping to give the people within time to consider us, we walk straight in. "I have come to see the children," I say to the first man I meet, as if it were the most usual thing in the world for a foreign woman to penetrate into this den. But does he recognise the foreign? The central hall in which we stand is ill lighted; with Indian garments worn in the Indian way there is little foreign to notice. He lets us pass. What next? How get further?

A boy runs to meet us, holds out eager hands. "Come, Amma," he cries in welcome; it is as if he had been waiting for us, "Come," then in English, "Shake hands," and he holds out his hand gravely. As gravely I shake it.

"These are my friends," continues the child, introducing with an easy grace two little lads, who

advance politely. "Shake hands." We shake hands all round.

"Where are the other boys?"

"Here, I will show." And he "shows," leading us straight to a room whence proceeds the sound of boys' voices chanting their parts aloud.

It is a large room, stone-paved, high-walled, with two heavy black doors, one leading to the hall, the other opening into the recesses of the house. And it is full of boys. Twenty-five or more immediately surround us, lads of all ages between seven or eight and seventeen or eighteen; beautiful boys, Brahmans of the Brahmans. The little lad who has led us in is ivory-fair, a very lovely child. "Sit down, Amma," say the others, surprised but delightfully polite as they drag in a chair from somewhere; but it feels too amazing to be true, for no power on earth could have opened those doors to me; I can hardly believe I am here, inside, with the boys of whom I have heard so much but whom I have never seen before. And the feeling of strangeness does not lessen as they crowd round, friendly and lovable and keen to make the most of this welcome interruption to the apparently strictly enforced routine.

For twenty wonderful minutes we talked together, they told me about their lives, their training, their habits—would have taken me to the back regions to see their oil-bath arrangements, had I not feared to lose precious minutes in mere seeing; there was so much to hear. They were in full flow, and I was learning all I wanted to learn, when the outer door

was flung open and an angry man rushed in upon us like a whirlwind.

"Off to your lessons, boys!" and he blew them off with a storm of words through the other door, and turned the key upon them.

We waited till the hurricane had spent itself, then calmly rose and departed with the usual salaam, which he returned, apparently too confounded for speech with us at least. But we heard the house-door bang behind us and knew that our adventure could not be repeated. Was it "chance" that had opened that door? Was it chance that years ago led us through the wood just as a child was being taken to the temple there to be married to the god?* Were not forces of prayer unloosed that day that have never lost their power? Has the time come for the boys in perilous places to be delivered too? Is this night's work to unlock new powers on their behalf? Who knows? "That which thou seest write." To him, to her, who reads belongs the answer.

But there was more to see. And we found our way back to the great open iron-roofed shed, called by courtesy a theatre. Nothing more unlike the English idea of such a place could be, except that there was a stage, with its curtain and footlights. All the rest of the inside structure was frankly Eastern, and, as it filled, the roar of voices was like the roar at a large railway station in India, where every man shouts down his fellow as a matter of

* "Things as They Are," chapter xxiv.

course. But when, after much agitation, the curtain rolled up and a throne was discovered on which, robed in a shimmer of pink and gold and jewels, sat a little queen, the roar subsided into a murmur like the murmur of waves on the shore.

Spellbound we too gazed. The child—it was our little first friend—was playing an Indian musical instrument, which showed to perfection the delicate sensitive hands, and as he played he turned his little head slowly from side to side and bowed in the approved fashion of beautiful queens. From that point on he held the audience. The roar from some fifteen hundred throats would burst out again between the acts or when others were acting; but let that exquisite child appear, whether as frolicsome boy or dainty queen, and the whole mass of excited humanity gave itself up to gaze. Now I understood why such children are practically priceless. Every seat in the theatre was filled: it was that child who drew the crowd and held it.

His acting was very wonderful. As the sordid plot unfolded he was the central figure. There was a king, a handsome youth gorgeously apparelled, excellent in his way; numbers of court ladies, the boys of our brief friendship; a clever fool ("*he* is the fool," the dear little lads had said pushing that bright boy forward); a musician who pattered on a kind of harmonica, his nervous fingers working interminably, whether he was actually playing or not. Every word of song and dialogue was clearly sung or said in perfect Tamil, but only the front

SUNRISE FROM THE VERANDAH

seats could have heard much of it, for the railway station roar prevailed always except when that child and his attendant children were the chief actors. Once the pandemonium was such, though never for a moment did it seem to surprise anyone, and the audience so much occupied with its conversation, that it did not perceive the child who, after a dull interlude, had come forward again, and for that one moment he stood, his little hands stretched out imploringly. Evidently it was very necessary that he should succeed. There was an anxious look in his eyes then, but it passed. With a great shout the crowd returned to its allegiance and the rumble and the roar stopped suddenly. The charm of the child had won.

And we left the theatre that night with hot hearts and wet eyes, for from the hour we had entered it, behind and below the apparent it was as if we had seen kneeling in a corner among the stage scenery the figure of a little girl, and through the clamour we could hear her pray aloud, "Lord Jesus, Lord Jesus, take care of me to-night."

That child is safe in Dohnavur now, but who could forget her story? Kidnapped or bought by a certain dramatic company, she had been carried off to a far city, and the whirl and terror of new sensations, helped possibly by some benumbing drug, had dazed her memory as regards her past. But some things stood out clear. She had somewhere heard of the Lord Jesus Christ. The one who taught her had spoken in English. All she knew, therefore, was in

English. She had seen " at the time of the lighting of the lamps " those about her kneel down and pray —" Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord ; and by Thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night ; for the love of Thy only Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ." And there in her desolation, alone among strangers, that little eight-year-old girl used to pray in the words heard in that dim other life for the protection she needed even more than she knew.

For life in a dramatic company in India is no safe life for a child. The temple service and the drama are inter-related ; not officially perhaps, but certainly spiritually. The only women in the theatre that night were temple women, and women of their kind. Theirs was the influence round about such children. Of the clean gladness of normal child-life they knew nothing, would never know anything. And yet we had held their hands in ours, looked into their eyes, listened to their talk. It was hard to recognise that we were a million miles away from them. Chasms divided us. O to find a bridge across ! God help us to find a bridge.*

**Brothers of the Lotus Buds*, by Godfrey Webb-Peploe, tells the story of the boys.

From Pool to Sea

In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die.—*Wisdom* iii. 2.

CHAPTER XVIII

AND now my story, like the happy little river that runs before me, runs gladly to its sea.

The river near my tree has broken from the swimming pool, and flows over coloured pebbles. Golden lights play on the pebbles, turning them to jewels. Then come grey boulders, and there is a short white leap into a small black pool below.

When we first found this place, after many searches among the valleys of these mountains, we looked with some apprehension upon the pools, for the children had not then learned to swim, and the pools, whose steep rocks run sheer down into unknown depths, looked most perilous. This black pool in particular we dreaded, and knowing the power of a name we called it the Death Pool, and the children dutifully avoided it. Now with what different eyes we regard it. The overhanging cave holds no terrors. We have explored every inch of it. The children may roll down the rocks if they like—and as their latest achievement, the excitements of diving having somewhat paled, is to race down the sloping face of the rock and jump feet first into the middle of the pool, it is not improbable

they will—we do not mind; they swim like fish under water or on it. So the darkness of the Death Pool suggests not danger now to us, but coolness and the shadow of peace.

But from my rock, the river seems to end there. In he leaps, white and glad, and loses himself in the shadow. And yet I know he does nothing of the kind; on, on he goes, leaping and laughing, lingering sometimes to enjoy the living green of the forest, or the crimson wild-olive leaves that carpet his bare bed in places; and all the way down for a mile or more, till it gets too hot for thrushes, the Malabar thrush, that bird of blue in sunshine and of deepest purple in shade, whistles his wonderful changeful notes, and many a little wild thing comes to drink; and life is all one glorious, shining, unmarred, unmarrable joy.

And then, in the end, the sea, the sea where he would be.

And now this last chapter seems looking at me out of the river, with its waterfalls and pools. For the last chapter in our Brownie's life came as suddenly as that plunge of our little river into its pool. And after that, we lost sight of her, though we know that she goes on.

She had not been quite well, but had given us no particular anxiety, and of course she never for one moment thought of leaving the nursery. We were all together. A dear and faithful fellow-worker had come from England, Mabel Wade, and the extra help that meant made it possible

to be together.* One day Mabel came to say the Brownie seemed tired but she did not want to leave Suhina, and would not, till the baby had finished her bottle; that event over, Mabel said she would bring her down to my room to rest, which a few minutes later she did, the Brownie looking mystified but pleased. It was a new experience, and we all like new experiences. "Salaam, Amma," she said as she snuggled under her blanket, that joy of the Tamil mind and body except in the most sweltering weather, and I said, "Salaam, go to sleep," and tucked her up with a sort of good-night kiss, though it was afternoon. I can see her amused little Brownie-smile now, and the cosy way she nestled down more like a little brown wren than ever; and she fell asleep, to waken six hours afterwards in Paradise.

Those six hours were agonising enough for us. Mabel was new to India then, and the horror of a mysterious, sudden, deadly seizure such as now rent our poor child's mortal frame, without a doctor to take the responsibility, was no light trial to her. To me it was bad enough, but I had grown accustomed to accentuated trials; they are part of life here. And we very soon saw there was no human hope. But of all this the sleeping girl knew nothing. She slept in love, as the old word has it, and at midnight woke: but of that awakening how little we know, only we know the river had leaped; the dark Death Pool for the moment had swallowed up its joyful

* See "Lotus Buds," chapter xvi.

white. But the pool was only a passage to the sea.

The sea, what must it be? Surprises, powers all unimagined, wait us there. And is it not perfectly splendid to know that every God-planned life, however circumstanced, is no mere flat expanse of sameness of days stretched out in the plain, but a river, flowing among forests of joy and of mystery, open at places, however deep the ravine may be sometimes, to the good glad light of heaven, with pools set in it here and there, and waterfalls, where spray rainbows make beautiful the air, and lovely sunlit reaches, where the ripples dance over golden-brown pebbles, and happy things come down to drink. And all the time, without one lost minute, it is hastening on to its best and gladdest time; for the best and the gladdest is always on before.

DOHNAVUR BOOKS

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*Three small books about our finances, written for those who share this work with us.

THESE PARTICULARS ARE NOW SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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By Barbara C. Osman.				
BUDS AND TEDDIES. Written for little children (8 photogravures)	3	6	2	10

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	d.	
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NOTE

Copies of the "Dohnavur Books," and all information regarding the Fellowship, can be obtained from the General Secretary for England: MISS O. GIBSON, 4, Alan Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19, or from THE SECRETARY, Dohnavur Fellowship, Dohnavur, Tinnevelly District, S. India.

In Ireland, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and the United States of America, friends of the work act as Hon. Secretaries and sell the books. Names and addresses of any of these will be sent on application to either of the above.

The books are also obtainable from SWITZERLAND: La Maison de la Bible, 11, Rue de Rive, Genevre. U.S.A.: Hope Church Sunday School Missionary Activities, Semple and Cote Brilliante Aves., St. Louis, Mo. AUSTRALIA: The Keswick Book Depot, 315, Collins Street, Melbourne; G. E. Heald, Esq., 18, Howard Street, Perth. CHINA: The Fraternity Book Room, 216, Nathan Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong; and in the ordinary way through booksellers in any part of the world.